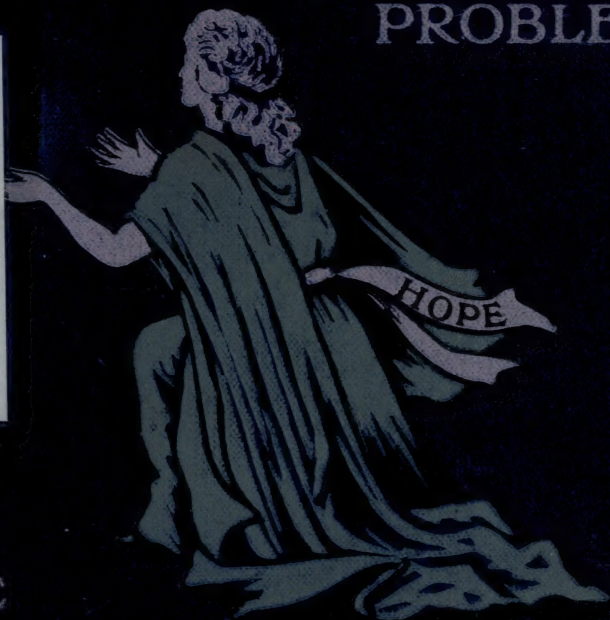


# BRITAIN'S HOPE



CONCERNING  
THE PRESSING  
SOCIAL  
PROBLEMS



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By  
JULIE  
SUTTER

*AUTHOR OF*  
BRITAIN'S NEXT CAMPAIGN



Danigle

1907





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*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

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# BRITAIN'S HOPE

AN OPEN LETTER CONCERNING THE  
PRESSING SOCIAL PROBLEMS TO  
THE RT. HON. JOHN BURNS, M.P.

PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD.

BY

JULIE SUTTER

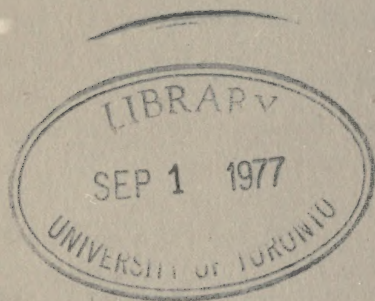
*Author of "Britain's Next Campaign," etc., etc.*

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## TO THE GENERAL READER

*MOST of the subjects brought forward in these pages have been treated previously—some by myself, some by other writers. It is not only legitimate, but a bounden duty, that all who can do anything to spread the knowledge of important facts should hammer away until the British mind (so slow to move !) is informed to the point of taking action. My own writing, both in the present and in former volumes, is based on personal observation. Of other works I would, however, name Eltzbacher's "Modern Germany," in order to refer readers on certain matters to that more elaborate treatise. With me it is a case of identical knowledge, and, even where I seem to be quoting, it is repeating the echoes of the Fatherland, as they live in my own recollection and are known to most educated Germans. In this Open Letter I have touched no further, either on the causes involved or the remedy, than was necessary to illustrate and enforce its main contention.*

*Regarding certain sketches of British conditions a reader's harassed feelings here and there may take refuge in the surmise that they are painted too black. The answer again is, "I spake as I saw !" While British wealth is being piled up at the cost of physical deterioration one cannot paint too black—for the outcome is the nation's decline !*

J. S.

b

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# BRITAIN'S HOPE

*AN OPEN LETTER TO THE RT. HON.  
JOHN BURNS, M.P.*

DATE: SECOND SESSION OF  
SECOND PARLIAMENT OF  
KING EDWARD VII.

SIR,—It is known that you spent part of the first long vacation the present Parliament has enjoyed in visiting "Labour Colonies" abroad, and that you returned strong in the opinion they are not what is wanted in this country. I understand that you have been to France and Belgium, but you have not been to Germany—possibly this is reserved for another holiday. You have thus not yet seen Wilhelmsdorf, the mother-colony of all, nor Luehlerheim, which charms all British visitors; you have not yet examined successful Schaeferhof, nor Freistatt—home colonies these, where the problem is being solved, how to take "back to the land" colonists who stand the test. It will be well, before forming a conclusive opinion, to see Schaeferhof, which is a farm offshoot of the Hamburg town colony, of which the report is published, "We, the executive committee and officials, give our home-colonists unstinted and unqualified praise for industry, capacity, and good conduct." At this place,



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as in all German colonies, men are free to stay or not, but large numbers after probation quite gladly agree to a two-years' contract, to be properly trained for becoming permanently settled inmates, with a view to ultimate ownership. This home colony thus might fitly point the way towards realising your much-desired British "land colonisation." The evidence of its experience, at any rate, should be taken. You have seen the great Belgian colony, Merxplas, which is not only a training place, but a disciplinary settlement, and it has made you feel you would rather a freeborn British loafer loafed to the end of his days, you would rather see him die in the street a free man, than have him rescued through any curtailment of his personal liberty, the precious inheritance of an Englishman. This is a noble sentiment. In actual fact not even a king is free to do as he lists. The sons of Adam—king or beggar—are hedged in, whether they know it or not, in a hundred ways; indeed, it is largely through the blessed limitations of personal likings and personal will that any of us gain the upward trend. The "can-not" is a Divine institution. The real freeman is he who is a law to himself, and it is precisely because the untaught wrecks of our social system are not thus free that they have become a burden to themselves and a menace to the nation. Yet they are far more sinned against than sinning, and the statesman who recognises this, laying himself out to the utmost of his power to devise a plan for their recovery, will be a national benefactor. In the strength of his wise perceptions he will formulate a scheme commensurate with the greatness of the evil he seeks to combat, but his sympathy with the helpless victims of false and ruinous social conditions



## Pressing Social Problems

will ensure its being impregnated with mercy, if discipline must needs be the instrument.

When I heard of your verdict on colonies, I fancied I saw the working of your mind. One of the ancient Chinese sages has bequeathed a strange saying to his people to this effect: "To have a badly-chosen name is like dwelling under a shadow." So strongly has he impressed the Far-Eastern mind with the underlying wisdom of these words, that the most flowery language known has been the result, the Chinese to this day endeavouring to clothe men and things in charmingly melodious verbiage, convinced this means half the success in life. And, of course, there is a truth in this. Even we prosaic Northerners know, "Give a dog a bad name, and he is bad!"

Permit me to point out that "Labour Colony" is not only an unhappy appellation, it is a faulty rendering. Translators are apt to be the greatest calumniators in literature. Even when literally correct (which here is not even the case) they often are guilty of falsifyings of thought and idea! There is no such thing as a "labour" colony in all Germany. There are "*Arbeiter-Colonien*," which is another thing! For the benefit of readers who are not German scholars, I beg leave to point out that while "*Arbeit*" means labour, "*Arbeiter*" is the working man, and the colony is devised, not as a sweating institution but as a refuge, intended to save him not only from the adverse circumstances which drive him to its doors, but even from himself. When in "A Colony of Mercy" I first wrote of these German havens for sinking men, I adopted the current English phrase, but almost immediately discovered its baneful influence. In a subsequent pamphlet, entitled "The

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Homelessness of England," I therefore wrote as follows: "Somehow the word *labour* colony has passed into currency here. It is a misnomer; it will never commend itself to the poor unemployed, leaving an ominous impression on his ignorant brain of 'forced labour,' 'hard labour,' or, maybe, of the workhouse. The word purports to have been imported from Germany, yet they never speak of 'labour colonies' there, but of the '*Arbeiter-Colonie*,' which is a different thing, meaning working men's colony. If the movement is to be popular here, get rid of the word *labour*; let it be seen you are thinking of the man rather than of the work to be got out of him. Kindle hope in the hearts of the sinking, the undone. Get them to believe in you, and they will meet you half-way in the great work of rescue to be set on foot on their behalf."

Do you perceive, Sir, how, according to the Chinese sage, you have been "dwelling under the shadow" of a wrongly-applied word? And, for aught one can tell, this shadow threatens to bias your sound judgment, colouring or discolouring your views on this all-important matter, even when you are most anxious to find a true solution for the appalling problem which every day presses more seriously, a very canker threatening to destroy the nation's greatness! With your permission I shall come back to colonies further on; for colonies, indeed, form a part, though a part only, of the redemptive scheme awaiting the guiding hand.

\* \* \* \* \*

It must have come as a sorrowful surprise to every true thinker when the Local Government Board, prudently headed as it is, proclaimed a Treasury

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grant of £200,000 to deal with distress—*i.e.*, the unemployed—during the present winter. Considering all past experience of similar funds—vast sums, which again and again have been lavishly spent (for Britain is nothing if not lavish) without bringing the country one step nearer any radical solution—surely, it is but madness to repeat such hopeless waste. But one reflected there might be method in the madness! Possibly, the cunning intention is to furnish culminating proof that money avails not—not even a Treasury grant—if spent in mere attempts at relief! Possibly, even Government has to tread the path of failure in order to strike the one true road. If one thus judges correctly one cannot too gladly hail the proceeding, for no money ever is mis-spent that buys convincing experience. In that case it will serve as a clearing of the ground for the ushering in of the true policy. But the rightful course is *a steady, statesman-like re-making of the people.*

It is a tremendous aim, yet nothing else will serve the country, and it becomes plain now that the great question cannot be dealt with provincially, but only nationally! In other words, while “step by step,” a bit here and a bit there, often is a wise course, in the matter under consideration tinkering in details can yield no radical benefit. When the whole body is sick unto death it avails not to treat a sore on hand or foot. This is the main reason why the net outcome, both of private and public relief efforts, leaves us year after year *in statu quo*. A clear-headed general does not base his hopes on petty skirmishings. His eagle eye scans the entire field. His plan of campaign takes in the whole position of the enemy, his every weakness, his every power of resistance. He brings

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up all his own forces, well marshalled, leaving no gaps in the chain of his reckonings. He concentrates. He presses forward steadily. He has made up his mind to conquer, and he does. Victory, however dearly bought, thus is won, and the nation rejoices.

I would earnestly plead with his Majesty's Government not to waste further time over detail improvements but to plan a comprehensive scheme, opening fire along the whole front. It can, of course, be done, and will not only be the most effective, but by far the cheapest course. The social trouble is wheel within wheel, link hanging on link; it is hopeless to attempt the mending of any separate wheel or link.

It is indeed a question of the utmost national importance, not only because of the immediate object—the uplifting of the unfit, or the succour of any poor unemployed, struggling helplessly with the adverse conditions bearing them down; it is a paramount national matter in the sense that the very existence of Britain as a world-power is involved. Britain now stands where Rome stood just before the Gothic invasion. Nations are like individuals—there is ascendance, there is a meridian, there is a down-going, appointed in every life. But the span of each life is largely determined by individual action. It is the Creator who has laid down the laws of development, it is man who breaks them—wilfully or ignorantly—and pays the penalty. Britain is going downhill at present. Yet her day of grace is not over, and in sheer self-preservation it behoves her to look well into the causes of her decline, pulling up while yet she may. Some of these causes will stand revealed in the succeeding pages. Remedies, too, will be suggested, but the plea paramount is for a national handling of the



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problem, a comprehensive undertaking, scientifically devised, scientifically applied. It is, of course, quite possible! And it certainly should be Britain's *next* campaign for a speedy realising of what now—at best—is Britain's hope!

\* \* \* \* \*

It has come to me like a vision that, at the outset, two things are wanted for the social regeneration of Britain, and—since the problem is wheel within wheel, link joined to link—all the rest would follow. Reform on those two heads, the outposts of the campaign, as it were, will mean the ushering in of other reforms equally pressing. As a popular German proverb has it, If you say “A ” you will say “B,” and go on to “C,” the momentum of completion taking the spelling scholar right on to “X, Y, Z.” Start aright, and reaching the goal is assured.

These two outposts are:—

1. The freeing of married women from factory life and all similar abuse.

2. The abolition of the “half-timer,” *i.e.*, child-labour—raising the age from twelve, as the law stands at present, to at least sixteen (eighteen in many cases would be better!), below which the youth of neither sex shall be bread-winners after the fashion now obtaining.

These two measures are imperative, not for any sentimental reason, but on the broadest national prudential ground, inasmuch as no horse-breeder would treat his brood mares and fillies, or colts either, in the manner Britain now permits her married working-women, her half-grown lads and lasses, to be used. He would say, *I have an eye to stock!*

How can a nation look for any healthy national

# Britain's Hope

development if she is continuously depreciating the unborn child? The child is not only father of the man, it is father of the nation, and here we have the whole vexed question in a nutshell. We are laying bare the very root-cause.

It was George MacDonald who said, "If the world is bad it is because it is badly mothered!" And Henry Drummond has pointed out in his "Ascent of Man" that the aim of evolution is *the making of mothers!*

Mother means Home.

Mother means Family life.

Mother means Race—"her children rise up and call her blessed!" But this was not written of a mother toiling in a factory shed. There she stands for—

Neglect of Home.

Negation of Family life.

Deterioration of the Race.

Here we reach the very bottom of the problem.

Think of the child thus badly born, physically, mentally, morally handicapped before it opens its eyes! Do we not see here the seed-bed whence springs nine-tenths of the unfitness we are deploring—the unskilled labourer, the workless unemployable, the drink-craving victim of the public-house, the denizen of prisons, of lunatic asylums? Here indeed is the origin of your wastrels of society, which are never wastrels of God's making, but always of man's neglect! It is our want of foresight, our want of dealing justly with the helpless masses, allowing abuses to spread and grow, never seeing them till it is too late—it is this which has brought upon the country its nightmare of a social question before which even

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wise men stand wringing their hands, anxious to solve it if only they saw how.

Here is the key to the solution: Go back to origins, help Nature once more "to make mothers!"

But this not only means setting free the married woman, protecting girlhood; it means providing the environment in which motherhood can live, move, and have its being. It means reinstating the man as bread-winner, adjusting the balance between employer and employed. It means establishing a minimum wage, making sure, not only that the worker gets it, *but that he fairly earns it!* Thus it includes his fitness, which means his training for the work expected of him. It means solving the Housing question, which takes you to the Land question, both of which, at present, are a standing disgrace to the nation. Yet, surely, they can be solved! And if you will only say "A," you will needs say "B," and thus arrive at a blessed "X, Y, Z" quite naturally.

Let me sketch present-day factory England. I visited an industrial centre, and on my first round through the city I said to the friend by my side, "I see what is wrong here: it's the slave-driving!" "Slave-driving?" said he. "Yes; look!" It was the evening hour, when the factories—the mills—give forth their dead. Is there anywhere such corpse-like humanity as the cadaverous men and women returning from their daily toil in a factory city? I use the word "cadaverous" in a double sense. Not all, of course, are physically on that level. Most are. But all—God help them!—are dead-alive machines, and not the human beings of God's intention. They are as truly part of the machinery—and nothing more—as a "mule" or a "jenny."

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These terrible cities have even harnessed children—tender children—to the cruel mill; and then one wonders that the poor are a decrepit lot, with all the manliness gone out of them—physically deteriorated, morally stunted! The day is past when one need seek to rouse Britain against such slavery as flourished in the West Indies before the Liberation. But there is really no difference between that slavery and what still goes on in cultured England at the present time. True, your British slaves go to the mill of their own accord. No one drives them. Yet they are as surely driven as any Uncle Tom ever was, as cruelly whipped. The whip driving them is called *Hunger*. The chain binding them is the employer's *Capital*. By means of their hunger and his capital he can invite their service, and, poor free-born slaves! they rush to their doom, mill-owners growing richer and richer from their toil, their under-paid life-blood. Go and look at them!

Any visitor stepping from the railway terminus of a certain Yorkshire town will see the open space outside the station crowded with the city's unemployed—unemployed *men*. How is this? He will be told that its male “hands,” broadly speaking, do not count on more than twenty-six weeks of employment in the year. Why so? The reason is obvious. It is because women—girls and married women—have flocked to the mills, taking a lesser wage than the male workers and throwing men out of employment. The mill-owners were only too willing to harness the women, saving in wages what is thus nationally lost in physical calibre, next harnessing the children to the insatiable machine, thus effecting still greater savings for the mill-owner, still more appalling waste in the



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national body physical. Poverty, wretchedness, unfitness, increase steadily. The city's wealth rises on a foundation of human deterioration, the city's poverty keeping pace with it, till even the slave-driver must open his eyes. Some good folk in the city start a "Guild of Help," proposing to heal the wounds of the city's smiting. These wounds are not so easily healed: the city must look deeper !

Nothing so roused me as this wretched child-labour. Whole factories in British labour centres, if not entirely, yet largely make their ill-gotten gains out of children. They have harnessed the "half-timer," boys and girls from the age of twelve obeying the cruel call. It would be bad enough if the children were really paid for the time they give—bad enough, surely, considering the appalling sacrifice of national health. But these children never earn more than three shillings a week, some only half-a-crown. For this miserable pay a boy or girl will work—week about—from six in the morning till noon one week, from one o'clock till six the other week, spending the respective remaining half-day at school. What fiend invented this plan, Heaven knows ! But that a nation of England's name and fame can look on while tender children are thus sacrificed to the Moloch of greed—who would believe it if it were not a horrible fact in every manufacturing centre of the land ?

To speak justly even of child employers, they do not *force* the little ones into service ! They merely take them when the parents say to boy or girl, "Now, my dear, you shall earn a few shillings for yourself to help poor mother in finding the rent." And since there is nothing more generous in creation than a child, these small labourers not only go willingly, but

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even gladly, even proudly, earning their pittance towards the family budget at the cost of all that makes life worth having—sound health. Nor would one blame the poor mother, overworked slave herself, for ever battling to keep the wolf from the door. But this is the condition of things. One need but mention the word “Home-work,” and it opens a parallel vista of similar abuse. Indeed, until this country once more has succeeded in producing parents worthy the name, a child in happy Britain must be protected by statute from its own father and mother. It is in Britain that a “Society for the Protection of Children from Cruelty” is required—protection, be it understood, mostly from their own progenitors! This fact speaks loudly.

We are so used to these horrible things. I spoke to a man recently—I don't think he was a mill-owner, but he had friends among them—and said he, “Why, it's good for the children to be taken on at the mills! It keeps them out of mischief, it trains them in steady habits, it disciplines them!” The man who could speak these words was really in blissful ignorance of their astounding stupidity—or was it said by force of habit? The wretch who whipped Uncle Tom till he lay dying, bleeding of a hundred cuts, no doubt did so by “force of habit.” He probably also called it “discipline.”

There is another evil in these factory towns besides female labour and the half-timer. I happened across a poor woman, sickly-looking and carrying a sickly child. I inquired into her circumstances. She had a husband working in one of the city's foremost mills. He had come through an illness which had kept him idle for nearly two years. He had got over it sufficiently to be taken on again at the mill. He was

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known to be a good "hand," and he was making up now, poor fellow, for the many months he had previously lost. He was working overtime! These mills at certain seasons, when contracts are in, run at high pressure—deep into the night over and above the legal day. Thus that man had, when I spoke to the wife, been at work every day for three months past from six in the morning till ten or eleven at night. "He is paid for it," says the mill-owner. "He is dying inch by inch," said the troubled wife. That woman had an insight born of her sorrow. "Why don't they put on the unemployed when there is extra work to be done?" she said wistfully. "Why not?" I echoed. And then she told me that though her husband thus worked like a galley-slave for some thirteen hours a day, doing so of his "own free will," yet that "free will" consists in the fact that he would lose his job altogether if he did not agree to work overtime. "The masters don't like to take on odd hands," explained the woman, "for fear of their spoiling the cloth." No; they have a knack of obtaining the "free-will" labour of the slave already tied to the mill, killing him inch by inch—duly paid for—with his own full consent.

Does this not show, Sir, that legislation is wanted at every step of what is called Labour?

Regarding the suggestion that the married woman should be hedged in by law within her own natural sphere—not, of course, to be sweated there by factory "home-work," but hedged in within her true province of wife and mother—I have been speaking of this here and there, and was met with the rejoinder: "Do you know what you are talking about? Why, it would throw a million women on

## Britain's Hope

their beam ends!" Now it is not quite so bad. From the latest census returns it appears that of the whole female population (over twelve years of age) of thirteen millions, four millions are wage-earners. Of these some 14 per cent., married and unmarried, work in textile manufactures; 8 per cent. in other manufactures such as potteries, bricks, glass, chain and nail-making, etc.; while about 16 per cent. are engaged in making articles of dress—these latter largely representing "home-work." The actual number of married women and widows in these occupations is quoted at 311,647. This does not involve a mightier task than was the abolition of negro slavery! But the freeing of British motherhood from grinding toil is not only morally called for, it is an absolute economic necessity.

As for throwing them on their "beam-ends," it is well known that none disclaimed Liberation more urgently than the black slaves themselves! They were afraid of being thrown on their "beam-ends"! Yet I have not heard that a general starving of negroes followed upon that great act of justice. Britain, in setting free these women, will of course make a few wise provisions for bridging them over—a fixed sufficient minimum for the male bread-winner being foremost of these. No such consideration as any apparent "beam-ends" must stand in the way when a nation rises for the undoing of a national folly—not to say a national wrong. The sweeping away of it must not only be thorough and complete, it must also be wise, merciful and just, with a due care for bridging the time of transition. Where there is a will, there is a way.

What is the present result of an evil practice? Cheap goods are turned out, enriching mill-owners and flourishing middlemen; but the nation is truly



## Pressing Social Problems

impoverished, truly wronged. Manhood deteriorates through being either over-worked or cast aside. Womanhood deteriorates through being forced into unnatural conditions. Childhood deteriorates through being deprived of the prime factors of growth. The financier lives not who could name the national loss in pounds sterling, for it passes the imagination of figures. Instead of raising men and women, fit bearers of racial supremacy, we produce hordes of weaklings—anæmic, consumptive, stunted in body, poor in brains, prone to vice of every kind and degree. This is only too true in the mass, if not always locally or individually. Then where is that far-famed British practicalness? We know how to breed horses, how to improve the stock of cattle or sheep, but we fail in the making of British manhood. Britain has to pay for this heavily. No nation is really—certainly not lastingly—great which sucks the life-blood of its own people.

Now without going back to the time—some two generations ago—when Richard Oastler and Lord Shaftesbury\* rose against the iniquities of child-labour, when mill-owners could defend themselves by saying, “We don’t take on any children under five!” when the hapless child-slaves of Britain were provided in droves by the very guardians! we may yet consider the present condition of things, deplorable as it is, but a legacy of a still more awful past. As a nation sows so it shall reap. A lifetime ago, with the advent of machinery, both individual and national greed began to sow for England’s physical ruin. We are reaping

\* Let readers turn to the biographies of these two national heroes to refresh their knowledge of the truly awful condition of things up to the middle of last century, the dire consequences of which have now to be expiated!

## Britain's Hope

that sowing now ! But here also we see the gleam of hope. There is a real improvement to be recorded of the present day as measured by a more terrible past. So let Britain take heart of grace and carry the improvement further. Let her abolish all child-labour ! Let her strive to make mothers once more what Nature has intended them for, the bearers of national health and, therefore, of wealth, and it will mean an England re-born. Millionaires may decline (which would only be an advantage), but the "wealth"—that is, well-being of all classes, from the humblest wage-earner to the professional toiler—will improve as though touched with a magician's wand. And the magician can be named—*individual fitness for individual work*. Have "an eye to stock" like the veriest horse-breeder, and all else will follow. This is the "Protection" wanted, and great will be its outcome.

It is indeed wheel within wheel, link joined to link. Setting free the factory child, now sacrificing its physique at the handsome wage of three shillings a week, will entail dealing with the whole child population of Britain. This is the Education Bill wanted, a Bill which not only shall break the chains now enslaving hundreds of thousands of British children, but which shall so regulate national education that *fitness* shall be the result. It will mean a complementary Bill securing the true home life of the people—of which more anon. It is thus only that sweating can be combated, and here is the base of the campaign.

As in the acorn lies the oak tree, so in the child lies the nation. Therefore work from this base.

\* \* \* \* \*

# Pressing Social Problems

## TRAINING COLONIES FOR THE YOUNG —A NATIONAL INSTITUTION

It will be little use setting free from premature toil the youths of both sexes, unless their country is prepared to give them something in exchange, something worth having, for what they are asked to relinquish. And since even in reclaiming the people one must begin somewhere, I would urge, Make a beginning here: start national Training Colonies as an extension to primary education. How simply this reads; yet does it take your breath away? Will you ask despairingly, How ever is the cost to be met? Sir, "training up a child in the way it should go" will be the cheaper course. The British poor law, British hospitals, British prisons, British asylums and, last not least, British charity falsely so-called—for that is not true charity which feeds the disease—now cost the nation annually many, many millions; yet half these institutions would find their occupation gone if Britain were to cease providing the raw material for their upkeep! It is as clear as noonday. Bring up the youth of both sexes fitly, and your army of the unfit will lessen by inverse ratio. There is more: not only will it cost less to train the young, it will mean opening up avenues for an increase in national wealth beyond the dreams of avarice—to use a hackneyed phrase. He was a wise man who said, "The most precious thing a State possesses is the labour of its people!" Who, then, would leave this "most precious thing" to chance development! Should you not rather nurture it, cultivate it, lending it a pound, so to speak, so that it may improve its every quality and return you ten pounds? The youths of the nation

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are the Creator's Deposit Bank in which He is for ever laying down potential blessings—gifts, these are called, and talents. How foolish to draw on them before they have accumulated! How extremely foolish to squander them by misuse as now is the case!

These training colonies should be purely practical—industrial and agricultural. Every boy should be taught a trade or be taken through a complete course of farming. Girls should be rationally taught what befits a woman, so that the future working man's wife can cook a wholesome dinner, keep a cheerful home thriftily and—most important of all—bring up a child aright. Infant mortality too often is but another name for mother's ignorance. See how such training incidentally would meet the vexed servant question. And would it not go a long way towards making a sober people out of what now is a drink-fooled people? Would it not do much more still? Would it not mean the re-making of the nation?

You would begin with those children only who are now cruelly wronged, badly used, saving them from their adverse surroundings by giving them an environment in which they shall have their chance—each God-created child its own fair chance—of growing up decently as future citizens of the Empire. For empire-making, like charity, begins at home. It begins at the very bottom of the ladder. It is a growth rising from origins and causes. No empire can count on stability which harbours a canker at its heart. But the effort, seeking to save the ill-used children of the poor, would spread upward, reacting on the training of all classes. British education then might become what now, at best, is the



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reformer's vision. Fitness would be the aim and citizenship the reward. At present the great mass of British subjects have no more idea what it means to be a son of the empire, than a spaniel has of being a member of the animal kingdom.

I am but throwing out hints in this Open Letter to a practical man. The suggestion of solving the problem of worklessness, indeed of solving the whole social trouble of Britain, by fitting the young for their share in the commonwealth, is a prolific one, carrying overwhelming proof on the very face of it. A child is the most plastic thing in the universe, impressionable as wax. Almost anything can be made of a child if you take it in hand early enough. For great as the influence of heredity is, the power of environment is greater, and every criminal now dishonouring his Creator, every loafer, every drunkard disgracing the nation, is a proof of neglected or wrongly directed childhood. Yet the Almighty Father is continually entrusting children to the nation, Christ, as of old, pointing to the "child in the midst."

One day, during bitter weather, I made a raid on the East End, being taken by a minister in a house-to-house visitation among his poor. The sights of that afternoon alone might fill a book, but one vision has remained above all others. A bare room, a worn mother—no food, no fire—when suddenly I grew conscious of a pair of eyes, large luminous eyes, looking at me out of a wasted child face. On a heap of rags in the corner sat a little girl; she was four years old, the mother said, but the little wrists were scarcely larger than my thumb. She was dying of some wasting disease the true name of which, of course, was Want. There she sat, gazing with the smile of a Raphael

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child-angel. She never complained, her people said ; she always just looked and smiled. Such a wan little face, baptised already with the keen beauty of death, and those eyes have haunted me since. "Why are these terrible things?" they said. One is glad to think that little lamb has reached the Fold where such as she are shepherded better than is their lot here ; but how many like her are dying every year by the thousand in this great London alone, because Britain has never yet truly seen "the child in the midst"?

Rescue the children, Sir, and all will be well ! Start training colonies for the young and you will sap the root of that curse of the nation, the unemployable. Take up all wrongly-used children, all child-bread-winners, shelter them in the nation's colonies, and the outcome in national advance will be stupendous. It will indeed mean nothing less than the re-making of Britain.

Boys' Brigades? Girls' Guilds? Why, it means an army of Young England, Young Scotland, and the noblest men and women in the land might proudly officer its ranks ! And twenty years hence we might look back to the present, wondering how a great nation, famed for its practical common sense, could ever allow any of its young people to grow into the hordes of unfit men and women now troubling the national conscience.

As for gathering boys and girls into colonies, this, of course, is a temporary measure. Youth's true training ground is the home. But Britain is a *homeless* land, as I shall show presently ; and until homes are made for the people, true homes, colonies are the only promising expedient. Yet colonies can be happy places. Spend a week at Lingfield and see what can be made even of epileptic children. The contention

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of this Open Letter is, that if you wish to solve the social problems, you must begin with the great problem of childhood—starting, indeed, with the unborn child! It is here only you can lay the foundation of a true and lasting reform.

Those who plead the “sanctity of family life” when one recommends the State care of children are, of course, quite right in theory. It is because motherhood in the masses is so largely a “lost chord” that the State must step in—not only to save the children, but through the children once more to “make mothers”! *In the rescued girl-child of to-day the future mother is enshrined!*

In the succeeding pages there will be further suggestions as regards training, supported by successful examples, which you will not fail to note. It will be shown that one Continental nation, at any rate, has supplanted Britain by sheer fitness, the result of training.

\* \* \* \* \*

Now, taking in hand the children is right and meet as a sowing to the future. But we have the present to consider, the many thousands of unfit men and women, for whose existence the nation which neglected them in their youth is directly answerable. These unemployables are signal proof that a generation ago Britain let childhood run to waste exactly as she does now. Shall the unhappy men and women who survived that ill-cared-for childhood be left to perish? Is Britain not bound to reclaim them? We all say, “Yes.” Then what should be done? I see no hope for them but Training Colonies—colonies where the unfortunate adults who missed being rightly taught in youth shall have their chance, though late in life.

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## TRAINING COLONIES FOR THE UNFIT

They should be general.

Let it be provided by law that every city shall initiate a colony, or colonies, for the in-gathering of all its surplus labour. It is surplus labour: we need not brand it with any worse designation; for the workless, whoever and whatever they are, in the bulk are "waste" in the sense of "not wanted." Each city shall become the guardian of its own poor.\* A colony could be placed within the city boundary, or it could be placed at a distance—in either case it would be the city's training establishment for its untrained, unskilled flotsam and jetsam, for all those who now stand in the market-place (labour market) saying, "No man hath hired us."

The proposed colonies would be either industrial or agricultural, and, planted everywhere throughout the land, they would form a closely-knit, heterogeneous whole. They would be supervised by a central board, of which anon. Having one ultimate aim, they might yet vary in character. The colonists might be interchangeable. Indeed, the aim must be graded colonies—colonies to form a ladder out of the slough of workless unfitness into the fitness of capable manhood.

Gradation means first of all degrees in discipline, compulsory discipline at the bottom, self-discipline at the top. Now, why look askance at that word discipline? Everyone who has had to do with children knows that the strictest nursery, the strictest schoolroom, is apt to be the happiest. Children, by a

\* A city, practically, if inefficiently, is that now by means of its workhouse; but the workhouse, along with the poor law, requires to be replaced by saner and more promising modes.



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wholesome instinct, loathe being guided by a vacillating hand. They never rebel against firmness, if only it be just and impartial. They trust and even love it, if they can see the kindly eye above the rod-wielding hand. The lower-grade colony requires to be strict, nearly as strict as a penal settlement—strict, not harsh. Always impress your colonists with the fact that they are there only on trial, only for a space, until they have acquired the first condition of all teaching, of all advance—surrender; and that it remains with themselves how long or short that period. Always show them the open door of promotion—the colony above. A wholesome ambition can easily be roused. It is not so much a question of forcing colonists as of capturing their wills; and how beautifully, how completely wills can be captured let me show by an example.

There are some “women’s colonies” in Germany. The first of these was started some sixteen years ago by Pastor Isermeyer, a true Elisha on whom the Bodelschwingh mantle of love has descended. What Pastor von Bodelschwingh did for the male vagabond, Pastor Isermeyer is doing for the female tramp. This earliest women’s colony is situated at Himmelstür, just outside the ancient city Hildesheim in Hanover. Observe that prophetic name *Himmelstür*—Gate of Heaven! I do not know its origin; it is of mediæval antiquity; but the colony now placed there is *Himmelstür* indeed to many a lost woman. Some six hundred have passed through it, most of whom have been restored either to their families (in the case of young girls) or to the community “clothed and in their right mind.”

Abandoned women are something worse than the most sunken of men—simply because they fell from

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womanhood ! Not only is their sin of blacker hue ; they are more hopelessly given to vagabondage than any man. To shut them up by main force would drive most of them to blank despair, if not to insanity. But Love is a great teacher, the wildest of inventors. See how this Pastor has surmounted the difficulty ! When I visited the place he said to me, " There are no locked doors here ; never a key is turned day or night, and the women know this." But there is more. Glancing at these lockless doors I observed over the lintel a quaint legend, conspicuous to the eye. It ran thus :

*" Reisende Leute soll man nicht aufhalten ! "*

In literal prose rendering, " It is not well to delay a traveller " ; but more pithily, perhaps, thus paraphrased : " Doors open outward ! "

Mark the effect of this cunning device, an effect based on the psychological truth that forbidden fruit is sweet. These poor women, with the curse of vagabondage in their blood, and the longings for the road ever again surging up in their untamed bosoms, look at the door ; they see it open, and stay within. Or they say, " I can always go to-morrow " ; and stay to-day. How cunning is Love, and how effective its bonds !

I attended one of the Sunday services. I saw the Pastor (he is a rather powerful human) stand like a very Christ amid these Magdalenes. His heart was in his words, a manly loving heart, and there was something in his voice which, like the smile of a child, was quivering with tears. I noted the response in the women's eyes—a blend, too, of smile and tear. One saw that man might lead them anywhere, for they believed in him. The Pastor and

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I sat down to a meal afterwards with these women, spending the evening with them. There was singing, not only of hymns; there was story-telling; they were made to feel at home, having given up the road—as they might think—for *a while*. They might always return to the free life if so minded; but the next morning each one would take her place in the laundry or in the sewing-rooms. They do hard work, and a busy place it is—a place filled with singing, if filled with industry. The colony pretty nearly keeps itself, having a reputation for good laundering and needle-work in all the district. The forewomen are largely reclaimed colonists, which fact speaks volumes, both as regards success and management. These women follow the more readily, being led by one of their kind. And the Pastor has an encouraging word for each and all. Who could possibly cavil at restriction in such a place! It all depends on how you dress up your discipline, and how you dispense it!

One is loth to spoil this lovely picture, yet I must point to the contrast as at present existing in Britain. Read Mrs. Higgs's book, "Glimpses into the Abyss," more especially her chapter, "Five days and five nights as a tramp among tramps." This lady had the heroic pluck to investigate female casual wards for herself. It makes one blush for England that in a certain workhouse in Mrs. Higgs's own experience a male pauper (not by any means a "saved" character!) at night was in charge—with right of entry—of the female wards!

I cannot quit this subject without pointing out that there are colonies *and* colonies. If Britain sets about reclaiming her lost masses, seeking to train them, to rehabilitate them, only the best will be good

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enough. You do not place a haphazard Principal, haphazard tutors, over your boys at Eton or Harrow; and only the best are good enough for staffing a colony! The inspiring mind must be a superior mind, the leading man a good man.

The first practical law laid down in such a colony must be, "If a man will not work, neither shall he eat." And more than this, the food in such a colony must not be a premium on unfitness. It must not be better than the average honest working man under the present standard of wage can afford for himself and family. British pioneer colonies are apt to have mistaken views on this head. Neither should the housing be a premium on unfitness. Both food and housing should be of the plainest. True, the men mostly arrive poor in physique and require building up, but this can be done without heavy butchers' bills. Anyone who has looked into vegetarian cookery knows that a very wholesome and indeed exceedingly palatable dietary can be evolved without any meat whatever. I am not concerned in these pages to speak the word for vegetarianism. I only would here lay down the principle that it is unfair to the working man who bravely does for himself with wife and child, if the unfit receive creature comforts he has to forego. The cooking department in a colony should not be in chance hands, but ruled by a "chef" who has scientific knowledge of food values and possesses the practical skill of dishing up such "values" with a minimum of cost and a maximum of culinary success—which is quite a possible combination.

I have heard it said that a cunning wife manages her husband "through the stomach," and that she



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who serves up his meals pleasantly rules his heart. Be this as it may, discipline at a colony will largely have to be managed "through the stomach." You need not flog your man, nor condemn him to solitary confinement, if you possess the art of wisely curtailing or enriching his daily fare. We tell a naughty boy he shall have dry bread for his tea; we encourage a painstaking child with jam and cake. Exactly so in your colony. Also a man's allowance of tobacco should be regulated by his conduct, if smoke he must.

To return to the grades: a man promoted to the second grade colony would find there a slackening of rules. He would be trusted where before he was ordered. He would still work under oversight, still have his daily task, but he would be made to feel he was a gentleman pupil rather than a commandeered ploughboy. There would still be the common dormitory (cubicles),\* the simple food, but recreation would be provided of a more liberal sort than could be allowed with the lower grade discipline. And thus you would lead him upward still, ever holding the possibility before him that freedom and possession await the man who earns his title of fitness.

The upper grade colony would be a great farm,

\* This matter of cubicles—a place of his own for a man—is the newest development of Pastor von Bodelschwingh's colonies as worked out in his most recent enterprise at the colony Hoffnungstal (Hopedale) just outside Berlin. Wilhelmsdorf and other colonies are being remodelled on that plan. It is morally, so to speak, the first step towards the Own Home colony. The Empress and her son, Prince Eitel Friedrich, opened Hoffnungstal the other day, the latter being its "Protector." Bodelschwingh hopes much of this respect paid to the individual person from the outset. Treat men as gentlemen, if you want them to behave like gentlemen. Even strict discipline can be thus tempered!

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like Schaeferhof above mentioned, so constructed that its inmates may become small holders whenever they prove themselves capable;\* and surely there will be few among the men thus taken in hand by the NATIONAL INSTITUTION OF TRAINING COLONIES who will not fall in with the plan of salvation laid down, gladly doing their best—some more slowly, some more quickly, and more or less radically according to the stuff they are made of—doing their own best to meet halfway the generous provisions for their betterment.

For even in the most depraved heart there is the prodigal's longing, "I will arise!"

As to the cost of it all: money is nothing if its object is the re-making of the people. Britain may begin to consider expenditure when for her own lasting gain she will have devoted to this process of wisely improving "the most precious asset—labour," say, one-tenth of the treasure she a few years ago lavished on the South African War.

\* \* \* \* \*

### "ELBERFELD".

Truly, Sir, if we say "A" quite naturally we shall say "B." See how beautifully we should be led! You would lay upon cities the obligation of finding colonies,

\* This need not preclude industries, for not all your saved characters could be agriculturists. Go to the "Colony of Mercy," Bethel, in Westphalia, and see what a hive of industry it is! There is work on this planet for every fit man or woman; you only need look for it, as I shall prove by an example further on. Or rather, you only need break down unfair obstructions.

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each city for its own area of distress—which, indeed, is quite a rightful demand, just as you expect each city to equip and support its own street-cleansing department. But colonies are costly, however prudently managed; therefore a city very properly will reflect that lessening the human raw material which feeds colonies will be the wisest course. They will at a bound arrive at the perception that a stitch in time saves nine, and that prevention is better than cure. They will note that while colonies accept the fact that there is chronic and widespread poverty—unemployed or unemployable—it will be cheapest once more to go back to origins—*causes*—and set to work there. They will seek to take in hand the people at the top, as it were, so that they shall never sink to that bottom where colonies alone can yield amendment.

The British Poor Law has had its day. It is based on a wrong principle. Its utter inadequacy to deal with the trouble pressing for a solution needs no emphasising—to wit, the Royal Commission even now inquiring into that incapacity. The only sane principle of national poor-relief is prevention. Just as medical science, while *primâ facie* charged with the curing of ills, has discovered that its true course, both as a scientific and humanitarian agency, lies in combating the breeding-ground of disease, by removing causes and spreading sanitary knowledge; so the real aim of a Poor Law must be not to let poverty fall into distress. Its basic rule must be “the stitch in time.” It must work from the top instead of, as at present, from the bottom.

I would urge doing away with the “Guardians.” It is a pity to lose so beautiful a word, but it has deteriorated into a bald “guarding” of the rates.

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Guardians rarely are in personal touch with the poor, the relieving officer being the bearer of their bounty, such as it is. No doubt there are worthy guardians, and worthy relieving officers, but how the poor loathe them! Spontaneous dislike is never a thing to be disregarded, it mostly springs from a true judgment. I have seen it stated quite recently that "many guardians seek election for the pleasure of over-assessing their neighbour's property and under-assessing their own." Be that as it may, you cannot get the true guardian, the "helper" worthy the name, so long as he is returned by public vote, a vote biassed by a hundred interests, important enough to the voter, even legitimate enough, but not primarily born of the desire to better the poor. For the rest it is a case of "the law profiteth nothing," it is "grace" which is wanted, that quality of which Britain's great poet declares:—

"The quality of mercy is not strained,  
It droppeth like the gentle dew from heaven,  
It blesses him who gives and him who takes."

This sort of "mercy" could never be associated with the relieving officer, nor with the guardian behind him, under the present Poor Law.

The Elberfeld system, through the pages of "Britain's Next Campaign," has become widely known in this country. The book had an unusual circulation, both through the ordinary channels of trade, accompanied by a reprint in the *Daily News*, and by a special free distribution of ten thousand copies through the post, made at the desire of a generous reader—a lady, whom the writer has never seen face to face, and who has now gone behind the veil, her works following her. It can be said



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without exaggeration that by this means the word "Elberfeld" has become a household word in Britain. I have received hundreds of letters, men and women everywhere asking, How can this Elberfeld system be transplanted into Britain, how can it be amalgamated with our traditions and conditions, how can we arrive at a system of poor-relief of our own, acceptable to our feelings, on some such lines? Such questions have reached me, and are still reaching me, from all parts of the country, always ending with the reflection, "The Poor Law at present is in the way."

And not only questions have reached me, but action has been taken in cities here and there, of which Bradford deserves special mention as a determined pioneer, Halifax, Sheffield, Edinburgh and several other towns following its lead. But all these cities appear to have accepted the "insuperable difficulty," some admitting that a civic system would be the most promising course, others frankly opposing. They have formed, or are about to form, "Guilds of Help," which guilds are an outer shell without the kernel, they are Elberfeld without its backbone, and loth as one is to throw cold water on so much good-will, it is yet a duty to point out that they carry the seeds of failure in their very constitution. They are pseudo-Elberfelds. They are Charity Organisation Societies under another name! Like the C.O.S. they are devoid of authority—unable to do as they would!

One could write pages and pages, comparing these pseudo-Elberfelds with the real system, showing how lamentably they fail, and must fall short of their ideal. But instead of thus picking holes, decrying the partial good they are doing (any individual person honestly

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bent on helpfulness will, of course, do some partial good among the poor), without bringing us one step the nearer any true solution, let me state here with all the emphasis words can convey, *why* the guilds and all similar efforts cannot possibly serve Britain in this crucial matter.

It is not at bottom a matter of individual relief at all, it is poverty which requires to be fought, and all that breeds poverty. But the first condition of success in this onslaught is *power* over every individual poverty-stricken man or woman. Here centres the whole question.

Now, no Guild of Help can say to beggars in the street (who by the hundred defraud indiscriminate charity every day, as we all know)—it cannot say to any loafer, to any tramp refusing to work, “We are ready to help you, but you *must* come along!” No Guild of Help can say to any good-for-nothing husband, living on the earnings of wife and children, “We cannot allow this, you have got to reform or you must be placed where we can try and reform you!” Such authority most certainly is required, but it can never be vested in any private body whatever, not in the most perfect of guilds, not in the time-honoured C.O.S., nor in any other agency, army or society, now seeking to grapple with the problem. *The British rights of the person will not permit it, it is against the fundamental principles of Habeas Corpus!*

This is the unassailable ground for declaring that the guilds and all other similar efforts are hopelessly inadequate. For, clearly, you require authority over the beggar, the loafer, authority even over those who have fallen in the battle, the so-called “deserving” poor, just as a medical man claims undisputed

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authority in a sick ward—not for authority's sake, of course, but in order to be able to do what he undertakes! Let me repeat: such authority over the lives—that is, mode of living—of numerous British subjects cannot possibly be vested in any private body whatever, but it lawfully should be vested in the community as a whole. The nation, as such, any city as such, will rightly take the matter in hand. Any city very properly can declare it is a disgrace to have rags and starvation in its midst, it can justly claim the authority to deal with the conditions that make these things, deal with the deplorable objects, too, the men and women who are the outcome of these conditions—and here you have the one sole and irrefutable argument for *civic* poor-relief even in this freedom-loving country!

I doubt if such authority could safely be vested in Guardians, but surely it can be vested in a city undertaking to be answerable for its poor!

Guild of Help advocates at various times have met me with the rejoinder, "Our people are so independent (independence being the hall-mark of British character), they would never submit to an Elberfeld system as your Germans appear to do." With equal truth you might say, "The patients in St. George's Hospital are so independent, so freedom-bred, they will never submit to the physician's house regulations."

No one wants the respectable poor to submit to any system; those who keep themselves by their own honest exertions will always be outside what regulations any city rightly lays down for the decency of its purlieus. Even the "deserving poor," temporarily in need of assistance, will not feel the hardship, for here that beautiful helper-service comes in which treats

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them, as a doctor treats his patients, not harshly, but with the "mercy which droppeth like the gentle dew from heaven," despite all regulations. In short, nothing marks more clearly the Elberfeld system, proving it the one common-sense and successful model, as just this blending of authority with mercy! These guilds have caught at the mercy, talking delightfully, and, of course, quite reasonably, of the "power of personal influence among the poor!" Thus much they have learned of Elberfeld; their mistake is that they think they can do without authority. It is enough to break one's heart to see so much good-will, so impotent, so certain of ultimate failure! What are these guilds in their eagerness but Mrs. Partington seeking to sweep out the Atlantic with a mop-brush! Or, to use a prettier simile, do they not remind you of the child shown to St. Augustine, engaged in baling out the ocean with an oyster shell? That pearly shell of "personal influence," so beautiful in itself, so helpless in the absence of authority! Failure is a foregone conclusion.

But you, Sir, could prevent this failure! Gather up all this willingness, endow it with civic and national status, transforming this army of would-be helpers into real helpers, equipped with authority; endowing each city with the necessary rating power (instead of the present poor rate), and the thing will be done thoroughly, efficiently, and cheaply. So little is wanted, Sir, if you will but speak the word!

For, of course, just one thing is required to lift all these impotent efforts to the true level. That one thing is *municipalising*. I have already pointed to the advisability, indeed, the imperative need, of laying upon each city the care of its poor. Without awaiting



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the decision and recommendations of the Royal Commission, there is a preliminary course for which there is abundant precedent—the course known as feeling one's way. The Local Government Board could quite easily step in, granting temporary powers, just to test and prove what a city can do! Thus, pending the abolition of the Poor Law, or its reform—if dry bones can be reformed and made to live—it is quite a sensible, indeed, a promising expedient to invite reform by enabling any city to work out an object-lesson, setting it free for this purpose from the trammels of existing law tentatively for three years, for five years, not pledging the nation to anything, but watching the outcome. It should be quite easy to create a sort of emulation among British cities. They would all delight in the distinction of leading the van, vying with one another to be the first successful British city—the first British “Elberfeld.” In all our cities there are plenty of high-minded men and women who would rally to the call. But they cannot rally unless there is a powerful call—such a call, as you, Sir, on the nation's behalf, could send out into civic Britain.

I hasten to add that when I plead for civic enterprise this is not tantamount—not quite—to town council work. A city is something larger, something higher, than its own town council surely! British town councils are not altogether what they might be, and it is the perception of this which both frightens and disheartens British cities, when one pleads with them for municipalising poor-relief. Before carrying suggestions further as to how to do it, let me point out that “municipalising” is not at all a new thought at this time of day. We have municipalised education,

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we are municipalising waterworks, tramways, electric supply, and other public interests. There are those who strongly plead for municipal control of the public-house, so that any city, as a city, shall be enabled to declare exactly how many facilities of drunkenness it would deem prudent. Municipalising poor-relief, therefore, is quite in order. Municipalising is the trend of the day!

Now while it is quite true that municipal authorities in this country, like pretty nearly all our government authorities, are amateurs returned to office rather than experts by training, as is the case in Germany, yet not every amateur need be a bungler. It is the British love of individualism which clings to amateurism, and it is not likely that bureaucratic institutions will make any headway here at present. German bureaucracy is a good thing, just because it is manned by experts, but if only the British amateur will rise to a true national outlook, your amateur government will do well enough, though its dangers are obvious. There is an ominous note of warning in the concluding words of an article on housing as given in a recent number of "Progress," reading thus: "The ruin of our race will soon be consummated if we retain our foolish system of leaving the government of our towns to be dealt with in the spare time of untrained volunteer councillors!" Britain does not make her chief justices, nor yet her bishops, as she makes her mayors and lord mayors! And when we need a physician, we do not inquire into his Liberal or Conservative leanings, we expect him to be a physiological student of sound medical experience, able to give his full time to the practice of his profession before we entrust him with even our minor bodily ailments. It is a pity that as

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regards city government we follow a happy-go-lucky policy.

Might the Local Government Board not lay down a few rules towards future municipal elections?

(1) No man shall stand for the corporation who cannot give his full time.

(2) No man shall be ratified in his election (this would pre-suppose that the Local Government Board in future had a "casting vote") who cannot produce satisfactory evidence of personal qualification. In other words, while the amateur thus may continue, he shall be a capable amateur.

(3) The amateur—especially in the case of a Mayor or Lord Mayor—shall hold office for a number of years, a space of time long enough to enable him to find his level in the duties he undertakes, and set himself to be more than an ornament in his high post. When I look at your Lord Mayors—quite apart from the mere show of the position—I am reminded of nothing so much as of a judicious high-born lady who once informed me: "I change my governesses every six months, it gives the children a zest in their studies!" Let the British First Citizen, though an amateur returned by vote, have his chance of growing into an expert for the good of the city he presides over.

If these few requirements could be enacted it would transform British local government by a silent revolution, and a new municipal Britain would be the outcome.

Look at Germany and how successfully her cities are governed. "These German cities," said a British critic the other day, "are doing, or have already done, what with us, at best, is the day-dream of reformers!" This is true, the contrast in Britain, for one thing,

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consisting in the fact that British corporations are forever on the verge of bankruptcy, the local rates in many cities being eight shillings and more in the pound—simply because things are managed “in the spare time of untrained councillors.” It is high time these primitive modes of government were improved.

As a contrast to this it may be stated that there are many hundreds of communities in Germany largely or altogether free from local rates, because they own forest lands or other valuable property, held in the common interest! Certainly nowhere in the Fatherland is urban taxation as ruinous as in England. Germany being a far less wealthy country is happily saved from the wastefulness of Britain. And possibly, just because she cannot afford the waste, she has so splendidly improved her resources!

To return to the influence of the Local Government Board on civic poor-relief. The Elberfeld system was “made in Germany,” but something very like it was made in Britain about eighty years ago, in Glasgow, when Dr. Chalmers worked out his well-known scheme in his parish of St. John’s (being set free within his parish of the then Poor Law!)—so successful a scheme that its ultimate collapse was only due to the fact that it *was* parochial and not civic, provincial and not national. Had it been the city of Glasgow, as such, instead of the parish of St. John’s, it would be alive to this day, and Glasgow would long since have been rid of its perennial “problem of the poor.”

Now municipalising, say, the Bradford Guild of Help, need not mean handing it over bodily to the Town Council, but it would mean that the Local



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Government Board gave a departmental status to that Guild, requiring it to be affiliated to the Corporation, and located centrally in the Town Hall. It would mean that the Bradford Board of Guardians *pro tem.* were suspended and that all local charities were required to join hands.\* It would mean that all Bradford charity and relief efforts were welded together as one united city scheme.† It would mean that Bradford, as a city, had authority over its poor. It would mean that Bradford, as a city, could call a poor-rate. Seeing that all other poor-rates would be suspended, and that all charities would be unified, no one need tremble at this suggestion, the rather that at a bound there would most certainly be a conspicuous saving over previous methods.

The Bradford Guild of Help, and other similar fledgling guilds, might become a splendid and successful *modus operandi* if only the civic status could be ensured. It would, of course, include that any mere amateur guild work should be effectually discouraged. The true guild worker is not the lady who happens to have time on her hands, nor yet the pleasant young man who has leanings towards a charitable hobby. The guild must be manned by Bradford's responsible citizens. It must be a civic honour to serve as a guild member. In order to secure the true helpers

\* Even endowments can be got, as was signally proved when Edinburgh thirty years ago took over the city's strong educational foundations, which have since, under the School Board, been so great a public boon.

† The Bradford Guild does call itself "The Bradford City Guild of Help," but that is a misnomer; it is pretending to a status not at present existing. They are only a Guild of Help in Bradford, which is quite another thing!

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there is no harm in offering them a sugar-plum. I would create a roll of honour on which were inscribed the names of all true citizens, ready to serve the city as helpers of the poor, serving their city not only willingly but proudly, giving their three years of service not as mere private guild members, but as loyal men of Bradford.\* Also I would lay great stress on the fact that the helper-service shall be manned by the *men* of Bradford, not because women could not do the work, but it is *essential to train the male portion of the community in civic responsibility*, that is in citizenship! The Bradford ladies are wanted all the same. Let them be enrolled in a civic ladies' guild, whose object shall be to carry out the *preventive* policy, keeping the poor from needing the city's help. A woman's influence is the greatest power on earth, and the Bradford ladies need not feel slighted that one invites them to exercise this power to the full.

\* It has been said that German citizens become helpers under compulsion, but that is not the correct way of putting it. The Elberfeld system was at work and manned with the best citizens for nearly thirty years before the clause was entered on the Imperial Statute Book: "It is the first duty of every citizen to serve the State if called to do so." Under this clause a citizen certainly could be coerced by means of an additional assessment. But if you ask the Elberfeld Poor Office you are met with a smile—"As if helpers under compulsion were any good!" they tell you. I have inquired of several cities, the answer always is: "So many of our foremost citizens are proud to serve, we need never ask those from whom a refusal could be anticipated!" Indeed, after diligent search I learned of one case, just one, in all these years, and in all Germany, where a man demurred on being invited to the helper-service. He was a schoolmaster who thought he had enough on hand with his youngsters. So how can one talk of compulsion in Germany? It is proud citizenship, gladly given!

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It is a case of stooping to conquer. There might be something less of seeming outward importance; there would be instead of it the immeasurably greater inward satisfaction of doing the real thing unostentatiously, and all the more effectively. They would be civic officers like the male helpers, the authority-armed "helpmeets" of the scheme.

It is division of labour in short, and a wise division! A ladies' guild would do just what the present Bradford Guild aspires to perform. A guild lady would always visit, the male helper being required only when there was actual distress. Dispensing money grants would be restricted to the male helpers,\* but the women visitors in the haunts of poverty would dispense that which is above money, more valuable than coin. Surely, even in these days of "Suffragettes" no woman citizen could feel underrated because one proposes such division of effort, hers being truly by far the more important work! And never let us lose sight of the fact, that wherever a woman should become a "helper," a male citizen would fall short of his duty! Now this is just the great requirement of Britain, that her sons should become experts in "citizenship"—so imperative a need, that it is second only to the solving of the social problems themselves! Indeed, these problems cannot be solved, unless every true Briton is willing to obey the nation's call to social service.

\* For the simple reason that, broadly speaking, the womanly heart is easily touched and prone to pity; it needs the sterner quality to keep the Elberfeld system, a system of mercy though it be, on the safe side of civic prudence. The female characteristics are so valuable, it would be a pity not to employ them according to their own true nature!

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I have recently had a draft sent me from a South Australian city—for even to the antipodes “ Britain’s Next Campaign ” has borne the good news of Elberfeld—a draft of a civic poor scheme so like a true Elberfeld that it has quickened all my hopes. Australian cities, municipally considered, are not any better situated than British cities. But a man in that South Australian city, of municipal standing, and a woman of large sympathies, have been kindled by the Elberfeld example, and their draft shows they are on the right road. It would be strange if from a far-off British colony must come the call to the Mother Country to show it is possible to do in Britain what has been done in Germany.

I need only add that in referring to Bradford I include every other city in the United Kingdom. They all could rise and do away with the reproach that whether in the management of their poor or other civic enterprise they are ages behind their German contemporaries. Without destroying British individualism, some additional pride of solidarity, surely, would be a desirable thing. Let every man look to his own as hitherto, but let him not lose sight of the fact, that the flourishing condition of his city can only be obtained by a measure of personal surrender, and would certainly have a beneficial influence on all private concerns.

I would further plead the necessity for creating a supervising centre for all public charities, a Board acting as a sort of outside conscience to their known and unknown proceedings. This country is riddled with societies. Millions are annually spent, and though these millions are made up of private gifts, yet all donations and subscriptions *bonâ fide* are



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intended to benefit the community in its poorer members. The nation, that is, the plurality of individuals, has a right to inquire into the spending of these moneys. The great colony, Bethel, in Germany—than which there is no truer and more complete charitable agency on the face of the earth, so complete that to call it a “township of mercy” is more truly descriptive than “colony of mercy”; so successful that it has an annual turnover of a million (pounds), largely its own earnings—this highly organised and splendidly equipped model of how to do it is annually or bi-annually overhauled by government inspection, the inspecting commission arriving at the shortest notice, requiring a rendering of accounts that cannot possibly be cooked for the occasion. No charitable agency, one would take for granted, need shun the light of day, and without suggesting that the bulk of British societies are unable to manage their own affairs, or unequal to truest loyalty to the *bonâ fide raison d'être* of their existence, yet charity officials are but human, and committees often merely ornamental.

I would suggest a CHARITY BOARD as a government department. Its object would be to unify British charities, declare open war to that deplorable thing—overlapping. Moreover it would rightly expect true results for the money spent. It would be a sort of nationalising of private effort—guiding it according to its own intentions, advising it, assisting it. No doubt British individualism will cry out, but the British “common good” has a right to step in. Union is strength, and affiliating all charity efforts to one guiding head-principle (call it a nationalised Elberfeld system, or what you like, the name is nothing, it is

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the thing you want), while protecting them from individual weakness, would enhance individual fitness. Nothing else is required.

In a certain northern city a couple of years ago the secretary of a branch association of the National Society for Preventing Cruelty to Children absconded, leaving behind him a heavy deficit. The committee of the said association declined to prosecute. They preferred losing sight of the man, and losing the money. This did not tend to inspire public opinion with confidence. There seemed a veil cast over the inner workings of the society. But there was more. In that same city there exists a sister association founded with the object of being a fund provider for the said N.S.P.C.C. A few years ago this sister society held a brilliantly successful bazaar, resulting in over £12,000. Very rightly it refused to subsidise the other society while under its cloud. The £12,000 obtained from the charitable public for a specific purpose were thus locked up. Is it a wise condition of things that can be overtaken by such a muddle? Would national supervision not be the most satisfactory safeguard?

A Charity Board might very well be affiliated to the Local Government Board. Its main duty would be annually to lay before Parliament, that is before the nation, an accurate rendering of all moneys collected and dispensed by public charities and relief efforts. The bare suggestion of this opens a vista of thoroughness, of economy, and absolute loyalty to purpose in the case of all agencies, be they called armies, societies, or guilds, that must commend itself to all true thinkers.

For, of course, all colonies also, and the whole

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net-work of civic poor-relief would owe allegiance to this central Charity Board. Thus, by a very simple expedient, and at a stroke, Britain would arrive at—what now so sorely is lacking—completeness and scientific soundness in the management of this vexed question, how best to deal with the needy. Is not this worth trying for? Should not the wisest men of the country, Government experts and others, forthwith be summoned to work out a scheme on the lines indicated and lay it before Parliament without delay? If this were done, there is every hope a plan of campaign would be formulated that would ensure the victory, and—through the uplifting of the people—raise Britain once more to the proud position of being a world-power worthy the name.

I know there are those who will tremble at the suggestion of a public Board supervising individual charities; it will be contended there are such Boards now in certain other departments which do not seem to make for national perfection. But that is no argument! The answer is, Let all true Britons work together for attaining the national ideal, an all-round ideal, namely, the well-being of the nation. Private effort is good, individual enterprise is praiseworthy, if it rises to a national outlook. It will be shown further on in these pages what is meant by national ascendance. The point here is, that there *can* be no rational campaign against the evils everyone deploras, and that all hope of a victorious issue must be abandoned, unless there is a *joining of all brave hands* throughout the country—even if such “joining” means the absorption of individual societies! But such union, which alone is strength, presupposes a centre to which to gather. The idea is not to submit to dictatorship,

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the idea is to recognise the superiority of an effort representing the nation as a whole, and therefore infused with power to do that which one aspires to. In short, it is patriotism quickening and enhancing individual good will!\*

\* \* \* \* \*

## NATIONAL INSURANCE

There has been much clamouring for Old Age Pensions, and various schemes have been brought forward. But, Sir, all these are fundamentally in error on an essential point. While obviously it is right, and even politic, to desire adequate provision for every superannuated working man and woman, it would be a mistaken policy to grant pensions as an "unearned increment." No self-respecting worker should desire an advantage towards the realisation

\* This doctrine of the unifying of charities by means of a *Central Board* has been my text these two years and longer, as may be gathered from my writings to *The Scotsman* during the winter of 1905, when I strove to unite Edinburgh. I am delighted to note that the Local Government Board now appears to enter on this track. Surely every sane person in the land, knowing the evils of overlapping, and the helplessness of individual efforts (*i.e.*, the well-meaning, largely futile efforts of individual societies) will support Mr. Burns in any onslaught on these evils he may be about to make. It will be a great day for Britain when all charities, from the Salvation Army which thinks, and, indeed, deals in millions, to the humblest society existing by public subscriptions, will owe a yearly accounting to the nation!

One may call attention here to the concluding chapter of "Britain's Next Campaign," which also pleads for a union of efforts.



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of which he has not contributed his just share, and bestowing on him such a benefit would certainly be unfair to the so-called better classes, who would have to find the required capital by means of additional taxation.

But there is far more serious objection. The pension as at present planned—describe it by what high-sounding phrase you like—in effect is neither more nor less than what “out-relief” is under the Poor Law. The guardians now grant a stereotyped half-crown a week, the pension scheme talks of two half-crowns, both being paupers’ doles and a ruinous expedient where character is concerned. Even if you do not disfranchise a pensioner, even if you declare “a man’s a man for a’ that,” this pension scheme, if realised, must play havoc with British manhood. I believe half the Members of Parliament are pledged to this ill-conceived pension cry. Was there ever so mischievous a proposal!

Take one aspect only: it is to be a general pension for all who claim it, provided they can prove they have “respectably” reached the age-limit. But here is the crux, though “prison” and “poor-relief” are proposed as a test! How, indeed, would you discriminate between recipients? The successful street-beggar, the good-for-nothing who lives on wife and children, the drunkard escaping conviction, the book-maker, the gambler—all this tribe, on reaching the age-limit, will present themselves with any *bonâ fide* superannuated worker, and the British Government are to have their annual twenty millions ready—or is it twenty-six?—nor ask questions! Indeed, some of them will trade on their pension beforehand, selling their expectation, so to speak, in all sorts of

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unthought-of ways, or raise money on it to their own further ruin and the injury of others. Those who planned this scheme evidently are not up to the tricks of half your intended pensioners! It says much for their kindly hearts, but let them judge now by the information further on in these pages.

This inability to discriminate is the main reason why a *contributive* pension scheme is the only sane one. The men, the women, who their life long have paid up their weekly pennies (which premiums must be in proportion to their regular earnings, and in conjunction with contributions from employers), have proved that whatever else they are, or are not, at any rate they have behind them a record of honest work. Thus the word "contributive" at once eliminates, not only the undeserving scamp, it also eliminates the submerged, the shiftless, the habitually workless—who, whatever claim they have to a redemptive scheme, certainly have none to a pension! And this is the broad distinction which has been lost sight of by all British pension advocates, so far as known to me. Thus, while pensions rightly should be devised, they should be sane, wise, and just. I trust I have now cleared the ground for your following me once more to Germany, for the true model in this matter also has been worked out there, and is proving its efficiency year in, year out, shedding blessings on the insured millions of prospective recipients, and repaying the nation in tangible gain. This gain is apparent in many ways, but nowhere shows more brightly, more encouragingly, than in the rapidly increasing fitness of the people. Destroy want, that many-headed hydra, and the people will rise by leaps and bounds. Latent forces will have a chance. Men and women

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will improve spontaneously, a new generation will grow up, and you will have worthy citizens where now you have your helpless "masses." Be it noted that the German system not only grants old age pensions, it meets at any period of life distress through worklessness if caused by sickness or industrial accident. It is a great national provision, and, like all insurance, is based on mutuality.

True, it would be a mighty task to set a similar scheme going in this country, but surely it is not beyond a capable statesman. And if it cannot be done without a measure of coercion, such will be justified by splendid results. Is there no coercion in this "free" country even now, say as regards vaccination? Are children not coerced into school? Is there no coercion as regards all taxation? Then why talk of coercion when it is a question of planning a sane and safe scheme that shall effectively assist but not debase the British work people?

It was the old Emperor William who led the way, his Chancellor, Prince Bismarck, opening the Reichstag five-and-twenty years ago with this message:—

"We consider it our Imperial duty to impress upon the nation's representatives the necessity of furthering the welfare of the working classes. We should review with an increased satisfaction the blessings of our reign, if we could carry with us to the grave, not only the consciousness of an abiding content in the country at large, but also the conviction that we had secured for every individual needy subject that aid in distress which, after all, he rightly looks for. Our endeavours in this direction, no doubt, will meet with the approval of the federate governments, and we confidently rely on the support of the Reichstag, without distinction of

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parties. In order to realise these hopes a Bill for the *Insurance of Working-men against Industrial Accidents* will be laid before you, together with a supplementary measure for a generally organised *Sick Relief Insurance*. But further: those workers also who are disabled by *Old Age or Invalidity* may fitly claim a more ample provision at the hands of the State than has hitherto been conceded. To devise the best ways and means for gaining these ends, however beset with difficulties, is one of the high obligations of a commonwealth aspiring to the distinction of being a Christian nation. By inviting the co-operation of the people themselves, and taking their own corporate efforts as a starting point from which, under the patronage and with the aid of the State, a comprehensive scheme shall be evolved, we would look confidently for a happier solution of the problem than State management by itself could hope to achieve."

This epoch-making speech from the Throne was given in 1881. Just five-and-twenty years later, opening the Reichstag of 1906, the Imperial Minister for Home Affairs could speak thus:—

"If Germany of late has experienced a great industrial advance, equalled by no other nation in the world, it is due mainly to the *efficiency of her workers*. This efficiency could not have been attained had we not secured to our people, by social legislation, a more liberal standard of living, and had we not, as far as lay with us, ensured their physical well-being."

Every one of these words should sink deep into your heart, Sir, and into every British heart in which patriotism beats and seeks expression. *Secure the well-being of your workers, and they will repay Britain in measureless gain!*



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I have quoted the Imperial message in full, for it shows, not only the aged Emperor's fatherly solicitude for the working classes and his wise course in seeking their "co-operation," but also, that with true statesmanship, he based his endeavours on such "corporate efforts" as already existed (namely, Working-men's Clubs, Friendly Societies, etc.) endowing them with a national status, thus starting, so to speak, with the material to hand, enlarging its sphere and therewith its efficacy. It will be observed that this is precisely what is proposed above regarding British charities.

As a first step, local sick-funds, whether got up by clubs, trade unions, by great industrial concerns, or by prudent communities, *i.e.*, parishes, were pronounced national and became compulsory. In neighbourhoods where such provision did not already exist it had to be made by legal enactment. As a result the "Local Sick Club" now is a general institution throughout Germany.

The sick clubs, comprising roughly the whole wage-earning class of whatever kind and degree, with incomes under 2,000 marks (£100) a year, are locally managed. The contributions are paid one-third by employers, two-thirds by the employed, and are reckoned at 1 to 1 $\frac{1}{3}$  per cent. (latterly permissibly 2 per cent.) of the average daily wage in the case of ordinary labourers, with a maximum not exceeding 3 to 4 per cent. for better paid operatives within the class for which the insurance is intended. Domestic servants and agricultural labourers can, and largely do, partake of this insurance voluntarily. Indeed, as regards servants, there is in most places a communal provision in conjunction with the local hospital which dates from long before the insurance was established.

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The relief granted consists in free medical attendance at the patient's own home, including medicines and certain surgical appliances—spectacles, too—and, in case of disablement (loss of wage), a sick-pay of 50 per cent. of the said wage; *or* free hospital treatment and half the sick-pay by way of allowance to the sufferer's family. Instead of admittance into hospital, the benefit of a sanatorium or some similar "cure" may be substituted, such as a hill-resort or the sea-side, *i.e.* saline baths, in which case also half the sick-pay, *i.e.* 25 per cent. of the wage in question, is handed over to the family, if in any way dependent on the patient's earnings. Thus, full medical treatment of whatever kind judged advisable, is free, with the necessary cash allowance in addition, for a space of time of twenty-six weeks. The law, however, is not hard and fast. Many of the funds have power to extend the sick-relief to the length of a year, to increase the sick-pay, too, according to their judgment, also to grant relief to convalescents—which latter may take the form of maintenance in a Home for a time not exceeding one year. Whenever the sick club ceases its function, health not being restored, the invalidity pension comes to the rescue (see below).

There is similar relief to women at childbirth for six weeks. Where an illness ends fatally there is a "death" allowance for funeral expenses to the amount of twenty times the average wage. But special cases are specially considered. A woman's confinement allowance can be increased up to twelve weeks instead of six. The "sick-pay" often is raised to 75 per cent., and the "death" grant may rise to forty instead of twenty-fold the average daily wage. This shows that every care is taken to measure the relief by the need.

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The management of this local sick insurance, on the principle of self-administration, is wisely left to the workers, *i.e.*, the clubs, aided by the co-operation of the contributing employers, who naturally have a voice on the Board, and supervised by the authorities. Any communal insurance, where it exists, is under the local administrative body. According to the latest returns (*i.e.*, for the year 1906) the sickness insurance comprises 11,418,446 persons. Receipts for the year £13,240,970. Expenditure £12,570,408. Funds carried forward £10,624,010.

This local sick insurance proved the base on which rose the structure of "The Working-men's Insurance of the German Empire" which is a four-fold provision: first, against temporary illness as above shown; second, against accidents in pursuit of employment; third, against "invalidity," that is prolonged or chronic infirmity, which, fourthly, leads to the insurance against old age. And whatever may be said as regards the framework of this beneficent quadruple scheme—in wading through the various text-books one might, for instance, desire greater simplicity—yet public opinion in the Fatherland is loud in praise of the foresight under Imperial law by which practically the whole wage-earning class is effectively secured against loss of earning power in a four-fold way.

The next development was *The Accident Insurance*. It comprises all workers in factories, mines, quarries, pits, etc., etc.; *employés* on railways, waterways, wharves, etc., etc.; in short, all operatives where power is used; also technical workers, including those in the Army and Navy. There is an additional agricultural accident insurance, to which forestry is attached. In fact all who labour with risk to life and

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limb, in whatever occupation, are benefited by this measure, which includes salaried *employés* above the working class up to incomes of 3,000 marks (£150) a year. The accident insurance thus numbers close upon twenty million persons—or fully one-third of the nation!—about one in five being insured for sickness, and one in four for invalidity and old age. Receipts during the year for which I quote were £8,389,140; expenditure, £7,358,860; funds carried forward, £11,858,880.

This insurance also is compulsory; it provides compensation for bodily injuries, or death, in consequence of an accident befalling man or woman while engaged for an employer. The premiums are defrayed entirely by the employers, and are levied in proportion to the extent of their business (*i.e.*, wages paid and number of “hands”), and especially in proportion to the risk incurred. If this is a tax on cost of production it is a saving tax, the British public paying far more heavily in a score of indirect ways just because there is no unified common-sense national provision. You will judge, Sir, how far the British “Workmen’s Compensation Act” (1906) comes up to this German measure!

The compensation begins with the fourteenth week, the first three months being at the charge of the sick club; thus, injuries causing prolonged disablement only come upon this insurance. Compensation consists either in free treatment at the injured person’s own home, with an allowance during disablement not exceeding two-thirds of the yearly earnings; or in free hospital treatment (including sanatoria, etc.), and an allowance to the sufferer’s dependents equal to the grants in case of death. In fatal cases there is



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a "death" payment equal to one-fifteenth of the yearly earnings, but in no case less than fifty marks, and an allowance to the survivors (*i.e.*, widow, widower and children, or parents, grandparents and grandchildren, if dependents) up to 60 per cent. of the yearly earnings. Compensation in all cases is judged and awarded by the insurance executive (see p. 62) within the district of that trade association in which the injury took place—*i.e.*, the Employers' Trade Association (see below). And there is further an arbitration court of appeal, composed of two members of the respective trade association, two representatives of the injured worker, and a presiding magistrate. This court is invested with the character of a special jury. In complicated cases appeal may be made to the *Reichs-Versicherungs-Amt* (the Imperial Insurance Department), *i.e.*, the central authority in Berlin.

In all cases medical opinion is consulted, and even apparently slight injuries will be highly compensated if the said medical opinion furnishes proof that the earning power of the victim has been materially impaired.

A special prerogative is vested in the trade associations for the prevention of accidents. An employer can be compelled under penalty of higher assessment, *i.e.*, higher premiums, to adopt additional safety measures, but the workers also, under penalty of a fine, can be forced to submit to precautionary measures.

That employers should have banded themselves together in "Trade Associations" is a natural outcome of the compulsion under which the entire cost of accidents is at their responsibility. Mutuality thus steps in for the individual, and though the individual employer finds the premiums for insuring his "hands," it is the association to which he belongs

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which takes charge of an injured worker. These trade associations existing throughout the Empire comprise kindred trades; they are invested with the character of "legal persons," and enjoy full self-administration.

The next great development of this national provision, forming the coping-stone of the edifice, was the *Invalidity and Old Age Insurance*. By "invalidity" is meant continued incapacity to earn a living owing to ill-health. It dates by Imperial law from June, 1889, and came into full working order on January 1st, 1891.

Some thirteen million workers, male and female, from the age of sixteen, coming under this insurance, are divided into five classes according to their earnings. The weekly premiums, ranging from fourteen to thirty-six pfennig (about seven farthings to fourpence half-penny), are borne in equal parts by the insured worker and by the employer. Thus in the lowest class the worker would pay seven pfennig weekly (*i.e.*, about seven farthings fortnightly), and so would the employer. In Class II. the combined weekly amount is twenty pfennig ( $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ ), rising in Class V. to thirty-six pfennig ( $4\frac{1}{2}d.$ )—equal shares being contributed by both parties.

This insurance is compulsory on practically all wage-earners up to earnings of 2,000 marks (£100) a year, but is optional above that income, there being thus great numbers of provident self-insurers (up to incomes of £150), who, of course, provide the full premiums themselves.

Thus, besides operatives and labourers of every kind, it further includes domestic servants, clerks, shop-assistants, teachers within the income limit—

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being, in fact, a provision for all that numerous class who can keep themselves respectably while health and strength remain, but whom the ravages of illness or the natural decline of advancing years must bring to want. And not only from want are all this class kept by a uniformly secured pension, but—what is surely no less important—they are kept from poor-relief!

It may be noted here that the Elberfeld system, of course, takes fully into account what is done under the insurance. There is no “overlapping.” These great Welfare Institutions rather work hand-in-hand, the German working classes at every turn of fortune, and whatever may be a man’s or woman’s plight, being met by an able and kindly hand, just the right sort of hand, to uphold them. *Volkswolfart*, i.e. the welfare of our people, the toilers, was the *bonâ fide* desire whence sprang all these undertakings, and, lo, it stands revealed as the nation’s welfare! Broadly speaking, the Elberfeld system and the Colonies work on a level below the insured classes.

To return to the insurance, the annuities range from £3 to £9 annually, according to the five classes; this, however, only stands as an initial sum, there being in the case of invalidity pensions an addition of three to twelve pfennig *for every week* during which the man or woman had been insured, and a supplementary Imperial subsidy to all pensions, whether due on invalidity or old age, of £2 10s. a year. Thus the full pensions for the five classes (representing fifty years of insurance) are equal to £9 5s., £13 10s., £16 10s., £19 10s., and £22 10s. These are the maximum “invalidity” pensions as at present fixed, the “old-age” pensions, as such, being £5 10s., £7, £8 10s.,

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£10, £11 10s., in the five classes. It will be noted that the German insurance law provides less for the aged worker who, though seventy, may be hale and still able to do something for himself, than for the man or woman to be provided for on the score of "invalidity"; it is the disabled worker, of no matter what age, who draws the more liberal assistance. This may seem surprising at first sight, but it will be found perfectly sound, both as regards justice and prudence—a far wiser provision, indeed, than your five shillings a week to all indiscriminate comers of sixty-five! The British old age pension, as planned at present, stands utterly condemned before the German insurance, the benefits of which fall with unerring certainty exactly where they are most needed. And that every need is considered is shown by the fact that there are eleven invalidity pensioners to one old-age grant recipient. It is interesting to note that at the St. Louis Exhibition of 1904 the highest award was given to the German system of insurance, the Prize Committee (in free America) with one accord acknowledging the superiority of this compulsory scheme over any known voluntary endeavour, not to say any conceivable "non-contributive" Government dole!

The above maximum pensions may further be measured by the fact that a pensioner's total contributions for fifty years would amount to £8 5s., £12 18s., £15, £18 15s. and £22, respectively. No other insurance agency could equal this as regards value returned. It may also be pointed out here that the insured workers, *in toto*, are now in receipt of yearly pensions amounting to more than double their united and entire contributions.



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When this insurance was first started, provision was made under which aged or invalided persons *at once*, and without previous premiums, were admitted to the benefits if they could furnish proof that during five years preceding their loss of earning power they had been in regular employment in one or other of the scheduled occupations—in which case they would have been insured, had the law existed. And, of course, not even now are there, by a long way, any premium-payers of fifty years' standing. Thus, also, now there is a generously-handled provision, admitting disabled workers to the invalidity pension on having paid the respective premiums for not less than 200 weeks, there being a similar arrangement regarding the old-age pension. Very material additional benefits may evidently bye-and-bye be looked for, either in reduced premiums, or, not unlikely, enhanced pensions. The amounts of premiums and pensions now obtaining are those fixed until December 31st, 1910, when the first twenty years of the working of the insurance will have elapsed. It will be seen below what immense accumulated funds have resulted already, and with what true beneficence they are meanwhile being used.

The pensions in all cases form a pleasant little income, if small, yet certain—a sufficiency to ensure for a superannuated or invalided worker a welcome seat by a son or daughter's fireside, *and not more!* If examined into, this also will be found perfectly sound and wise. The pensions stand as an encouragement to a man's own further thrift, for a worker with a certain expectation of such a grant will the more readily exert himself to lay up some additional penny for the rainy day. Here, also, it may be observed that the accident insurance is more liberally planned than

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provision against invalidity, there being  $19\frac{3}{4}$  millions in the former as against  $13\frac{2}{3}$  millions in the latter. The larger number is due to the fact that a wider range is allowed, both as regards occupations and incomes, the accident insurance, as shown before, taking in persons up to those earning £150 a year. Grants, also, are more liberal; an injured person, if totally disabled, as we have seen, is compensated by an equivalent of two-thirds of the wage lost, besides any necessary treatment; if he is partially disabled, the compensation is commensurate. In any case, the sufferer thus is certain of a fair sufficiency for life. This wider margin, again, is the result of thoughtful consideration. An accident is tantamount to a sudden misfortune befalling a worker, possibly before he had any chance whatever of making the slightest provision for the future, while failing health and lessening working powers due to advancing age are our common human lot, against which every man and woman ought to strive to be prepared. Now the moral obligations of the individual must never be superseded by national assistance. Thus a man rightly should be liberally compensated for an accident, but he most certainly should do his own part towards a provision due to his declining years. Sir, it seems to your correspondent that a careful examination into the German National Working-men's Insurance leaves far behind your proposed British old-age pension project, much as it is advocated by many well-wishers! It is a weakly-conceived and hurtful scheme which can never lead to any national satisfaction. Certain defenders of British social conditions, or of their bulwarks, when all valid argument is spent, will turn on one with the parting shot, "These German methods would destroy the

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splendid self-help of our working classes! We are proud of their 'friendly societies,' their 'clubs'!" Certainly. Only somehow this fails to appeal to one's sense of correct appreciation. When the hard-used people, deprived of all access to the soil, strive to satisfy their love of flowers by raising geraniums on their window sills—God bless them!—it is not for the land-grabber, nor yet for his apologist, to say much about the beauty of window gardening! Figures, however, are the best rejoinder. According to recent returns the annual deposits in the savings' banks of "poor" Prussia amount to £10 10s. 6d. per head of the population, as against £4 15s. 7d. similarly laid by in wealthy England. Conclusive evidence this, that *the more you do for the people in the way of nationally securing their welfare, the more they will do for themselves!*

The machinery of the invalidity and old-age insurance, *i.e.*, for collecting the premiums, is simple. Every employer is charged with keeping his workers up to their duty. His own contributions he can pay quarterly, but he mostly sees to his people's premiums when paying the weekly wage. The rest is done through the post-office. A certain stamp is issued, or rather stamps, for the various weekly amounts. Every insured person holds a card, divided into fifty-two squares for the affixing of these insurance stamps, and when such card is filled it is exchanged at any post-office for a new one, on which the accumulated value is duly entered, all deposits—for the premiums are "deposits"—being, of course, also placed to the holder's credit at the Provincial Insurance Boards, these being Government district departments, centralised in the *Reichs-Versicherungs-Amt* in Berlin. There are, further, everywhere local executive

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committees at which representatives of employers and employed (five of each) take their place together with the Government officials. These committees, as regards the spokesmen of employers and employed, are honorary, except for out-of-pocket expenses; they act as the immediate judicial authority in all cases coming upon the insurance. For every case is individually examined into and pronounced upon.

At German post-offices you constantly meet the people doing their insurance business, but although these many millions are concerned, it seems to create less confusion at a post-office counter than, say, the strain of Christmas cards does in this country.

In German private families the insurance of dependents is quite well understood. Indeed, again and again I have noticed that mistresses not only look after their own duty in the matter, but generally have an odd coin or two to spare to pay a servant's premium—no doubt as a sort of weekly reward for good behaviour. Not a bad plan! In the case of charwomen, washerwomen, etc., the "Monday" employer is required to see to the weekly discharge of the insurance duty. For there are, of course, all sorts of special arrangements to suit special cases. While a man is serving his time in the army, for instance, he is exempt from the insurance, but he does not therefore lose his claims, the State paying his premiums while he is under arms. The same in the navy. All insured persons are duly warned to practise regularity under pain of forfeiting the benefits. And although, when first started, there was a good deal of grumbling among the people, simply because they first had to experience the wondrous advantages devised for them by the insurance laws, yet by this time they all



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know and appreciate these benefits to the full, and quite eagerly themselves look after the due working of the scheme. They hold their "cards" quite as conscientiously as a British worker might hold his post-office savings' bank book, or a life policy.

Figures for the year quoted in these remarks are : Receipts from the  $13\frac{2}{3}$  millions premium payers and their employers, £11,925,026 ; expenditure in pensions paid, £5,855,025, to which has to be added the Imperial subsidy, £2,263,772 ; funds carried forward, £58,020,273.

Look at the general results. Not only do the annuities, compensations, and sick allowances average now more than £60,000 daily (close upon £25,000,000 annually), but during a single twelvemonth £200,000 has been returned to young people about to marry, the premiums (the bride's, and supposing she ceases to be a worker) thus figuring as a sort of savings' bank. In the same year more than £50,000 has been spent on behalf of orphans whose parents were insured—the capital available for such and similar purposes increasing year after year. Indeed, in the course of about fifteen years, under this blessed quadruple insurance, about two hundred and fifty millions (pounds) have been received on the score of sickness, accident, invalidity, or old age by some sixty millions of workers or their dependents—of which vast sum the working classes, as already stated, by their own premiums provided the lesser half, having in the bulk drawn considerably over a million beyond their own contributions. Will it offend British practical common-sense to be reminded that two hundred and fifty millions is about equal to the treasure carried by this nation into South Africa for a pitiable war? But, as will have

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been noted, there are now, over and above, vast accumulated funds—*i.e.*, upwards of eighty millions sterling. Nor are these funds dead funds, but are steadily returning to the people in a score of tangible advantages. For instance, they are available at a low rate of interest for housing purposes. They are further devoted to the building of sanatoria, especially in the crusade against consumption; also to the raising of homes of rest, including holiday resorts for tired workers. See what a nation can do, and does, once its mind is made up to work for the rational uplifting of its masses! Concerning the sanatoria just mentioned (of which the insurance boards themselves now maintain some seventy), one may note that in England and Wales there are about 44,000 annual deaths due to consumption, of which by far the larger proportion must be of the working classes. Now, in Germany, the first inroads of the fell scourge are combated. The sufferer is entitled during six months to the assistance of his sick club, and after that becomes chargeable to the invalidity insurance; but the latter very properly, knowing that a stitch in time saves nine, prudently sees to him from the first. It arranges with the sick club, causing him to be sent at once to a sanatorium for special treatment, and in seven cases out of ten, instead of becoming permanently invalided and a recipient of the pension, he is restored to his own earning powers, a useful member of society still, where in Britain he would, most likely, be registered among the annual 44,000 largely preventible deaths! Similarly many an anæmic factory girl under this insurance gets a six weeks' order to some hill resort, simply because the insurance authorities are fast learning from the medical profession that prevention in all cases is not only the

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more merciful, but by far the cheaper course. A German servant girl, too, falling ill is at once received into hospital, where in Britain (how often !) she is discharged by her mistress, or, as it is euphemistically termed, "sent home." I am informed that the medical profession in Germany avails itself to the full of the provisions under the insurance laws to guard the health of the working classes, to nurture it, to improve it. The expression, "physical deterioration," is a British-coined phrase; one never hears it in Germany. In Britain the birth-rate is alarmingly declining, whereas Germany has a yearly increase of population equalled by no other nation except the oversea countries, which are augmented by immigration. Here are three startling figures: Germany has an annual increase of 15,000 per million inhabitants; Great Britain, including her hospitality to "aliens," of 9,000; France, of barely 2,000.

One can only mention salient points in this Open Letter. And one point to be driven home is this: see what you would lose by a "non-contributive" scheme! Such a one will not result in any accumulated funds to shed blessings in countless ways on the contributing workers, whether in sickness or in health—no funds to build sanatoria with, no funds to devote to housing, nor yet to equip the splendid Labour Bureaux, of which I shall have occasion to speak almost immediately. Should any one reply, "Britain has money at her command whenever she chooses to raise any," then the answer is, She has indeed; but it does not follow she will so readily finance the various undertakings for the "People's Welfare" after the manner in which these are subsidised by the German National Working-men's Insurance. Surely

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this is patent, and in itself should be a sufficient reason to make a patriotic ministry reconsider its plans.

There are other points involved showing the British pension scheme, as at present planned, is not fit to hold a candle to the German insurance! It is old age pension pure and simple, and a sterile provision, even if the recipients were all proved worthy. It would not extend to worklessness through sickness or "invalidity"; it would not lift the working classes above the dread of want, however caused. It is a tinkering in detail, and you would have the poor with you always—as now, so with your promised five shillings.

Yet even this is not all! Your proposed pensions are to be handed to the pensioners by means of the post office, and there your beneficence ends. Now, look at the German insurance and the thousands, indeed, tens of thousands, of honorary boards it has called into existence throughout the country. What these boards mean in the way of *bonds* between the "classes and the masses" is simply beyond the power of language to express. Think of the forces of sympathy set flowing! The ability of understanding created! Teaching the well-to-do not only to feel for the poor and suffering, but actually to *comprehend* the nature of want! Aye, and another force is lost—strangled at birth, so to speak, by your ill-planned scheme, *i.e.*, the conciliating influences between employers and employed! Remember, that their representatives, year in, year out, sit side by side on those honorary committees; together they consider a case of illness or invalidity; together they examine any injury, not only what it means to the worker, but how it touches



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the employer—it is they, the spokesmen of both, who have a voice regarding the nature of assistance, or the amount of compensation. I make bold to say that great as the insurance is in itself, valuable as it is in its economic aspect, it is outdone and outshone by the *ideal* worth of this hand-in-hand effort between employers and employed to arrive at a judgment which shall not only be merciful and generous to a sufferer, but just also to the man in whose service an injury was sustained! All this, and a great deal more, you are going to lose by your piecemeal pension scheme, your “unearned increment” policy, your “non-contributive” sop to the working classes. One always knew the British for a prosaic rather than an idealistic people, but such a dead want of ideality where the ideal, as it happens, spells sheer practical advantage, is a sorrowful discovery.

The Prime Minister, on another matter concerning the people’s welfare, said quite recently that “Britain was falling behind other nations.” She certainly will not be able to measure herself with Germany, or hold up her practical genius in the presence of that nation, if the old age pension, as devised here, becomes fact—a fact devoid in every direction of the manifold blessings, the wholesome and beautiful influences inherent in the German measure. Surely one need but plainly show these things, and the noble minds whose is the planning will turn right-about-face, leading this great nation so that she can “measure herself” with her compeers across the water!

It is for the present writer only to sound the note of warning; it is for a British Government to look into these things with its own eyes. One cannot too earnestly urge, therefore, the expediency of sending a

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deputation to Berlin, a sort of Royal Commission, for the special purpose of inquiring into the Imperial Insurance, both as regards its workings and its results. Only I should in this case humbly venture to recommend, first, that the deputies really were conversant with the German language, and, second, that they went on their errand with a sufficiency of time allowed. The most useful deputy would be he who could reside in Germany—not in an English colony like those at Dresden, or Bonn, or Heidelberg—but live among Germans, now in one place, now in another, separating himself from pre-conceived British views, say, for a space of six months. I have sad experience of British deputations inquiring into German modes of philanthropy. They go for a couple of days, armed as a rule with the barest smattering of the language. It is not surprising if the Germans, considering their own painstaking habits, marvel at such investigators; but they no longer wonder that so much confused opinion should be current here.

\* \* \* \* \*

If Britain sets out for a national insurance, as it is hoped, it would be highly desirable to include *Insurance for Worklessness under Trade Depression*, or during the inclemency of the winter months. There is such an insurance in good working order which your deputies might investigate at Cologne. Its chief provisions are that it admits only workers in regular employ, who gladly pay a somewhat higher premium, yet not beyond a maximum of sixpence a week in the case of skilled workmen, the unskilled paying fourpence. A fund is thus raised, which, with the additional capital provided by some public-spirited

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contributors and a grant from the municipality, enables the institution to tide its members over seasons of slackness with a daily grant of one to two shillings. This branch of insurance is but in its early days; no doubt it will develop, and the idea could certainly be developed by competent British legislation. There is something hopelessly wrong in the perennial worklessness of this wealthy country. Its disastrous effects on character surely could be met by combination and foresight, and no willing working man or woman need be left to cold and hunger, or, at best, to spasmodic charity in the winter months. If the £200,000 Treasury grant secured by you, Sir, were spent on such an effort, little could be said either against its prudence or its foresight. It might prove the mustard seed from which a tree would grow with room beneath its sheltering branches for every workless sufferer of this great London.

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## LABOUR BUREAUX

Supposing your deputies go to Berlin, they might with advantage look into the great Labour Agency there, now housed in a magnificent block, which building also has been raised by means of a loan at the low interest of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. from the accumulated national insurance funds! This is worth noting, over and above all that has already been recorded of that successful national institution. I am anxious to press home to you, Sir, in particular, and to the nation in general, what illimitable good could be secured in a country like Britain, whose wealth is at least equalled by its generous givings,

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if not always by its wise spendings, if you could usher in the day of national enterprise in matters of relief, instead of entrusting it as hitherto to the happy-go-lucky impulses of private so-called beneficence.

The Berlin agency is assisted, moreover, by a yearly subsidy of £1,500 from the City Council.

There is another such splendidly equipped Labour Agency at Munich, conducted on purely municipal lines.

In Britain I have noted the primitive expedient that certain daily papers hang out their "vacant situations" columns here and there about a city. It is a pitiful sight to watch the hungry-eyed work-seekers poring over these advertisements. It is they, also, who are apt to monopolise the newspapers in the reading rooms of public libraries, turning away despairfully, oh, how often!

In the following suggestions I am guided by these German models.

I would have a Labour Bureau in every city—if not purely civic, at least, as at Berlin, municipally acknowledged and assisted. In a city like London, there would be a head bureau with branches throughout the metropolis. All these, together with the bureaux of every other town, would be in constant inter-communication—through the post, by telegraph, and by telephone, these being placed at their service—and they would regularly exchange their vacancy lists. The bureau, being a civic, or semi-civic, and national institution, should be free. Employers would be encouraged to register their wants there, and no doubt they would do so gladly, from the business firm requiring a cashier to the housewife needing a cook.



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There would be an efficient staff sifting and tabulating situations. Work-seekers would be supplied with addresses, not at random, but methodically. In some of these places in Germany the applicant has to take with him a postcard bearing the signature of the bureau which sends him, which postcard the approached employer is requested to return to the office, filled up, whether he engages the applicant or not. Funds, also, are available to send an applicant from one city to another within reasonable distance—which, for approved purposes, can be done in Germany on “soldiers’ tickets,” *i.e.*, at one-half to one-third the usual fare. But then railways in Germany are nationally managed!

It surely is a wise proceeding to strain every nerve for bringing together work and work-seekers, and whatever may be the cost of establishing a suitable machinery in this country, it is quite plain it will result in vast savings in the end—always bearing in mind that the labour of its people is the most precious (indeed, the most gain-yielding) thing a nation possesses.

These great German labour bureaux are equipped very much after the fashion of Young Men’s Christian Association premises here. There are large assembly halls for male or female work-seekers respectively. There are even separate rooms for separate guilds. In some places there are separate departments for juveniles. There are offices, waiting rooms, reading rooms, and also refreshment rooms, where good food is served cheap, both for coupons provided by the guild registries and for cash. There are work-rooms—at least, at the Berlin bureau—for tailors and shoemakers, where repairs are made at mere nominal

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cost. There is even a small surgery, and there are bath-rooms, where hot and cold baths can be had any time of the day—shower baths for a halfpenny. The Berlin registry has house-room for several thousand people. Registration there, owing, no doubt, to the sumptuous establishment and its quasi-non-municipal character, is not free, a fee of twopence-halfpenny being charged. The Munich bureau, though nearly as well provided, is free to all comers. It has a subsidy from the State, and the rest of its expenditure, to the amount of some £1,400 a year, is borne by the municipality. It is managed by a committee consisting of a permanent town councillor, acting as president, and six elected members, *i.e.*, three employers and three working men, elected for a space of three years by their peers. Observe the wisdom of this arrangement. There is an executive over and above, consisting of a couple of permanent town councillors. There is also a ladies' committee to discharge such functions as are fitly delegated to ladies—which ladies' committee is representative of all classes, showing what an interest the general public takes in the institution. All committees, of course, are honorary, there being, besides, a paid staff consisting of an inspector, an adequate number of responsible clerks and assistants, and attendants for the waiting rooms.

The Munich Labour Bureau has struck out on a line of national usefulness of its own. Its directors, with statesmanlike foresight, lay themselves out to catch the very children as they are leaving school, seeking to guide their choice of labour, so as to harness the right capacity to the right requirement from the outset, as it were. How surprisingly

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practical this is! Why could similar guidance not be possible here, instead of leaving boys and girls to haphazard openings, which too often means consulting the greed (or let us say need) of their parents, who cannot too quickly turn their offspring into assets towards the family budget, eagerly snatching at the half-crown or three shillings a week, and leaving the future to turn out as it may. It is in this deplorable condition of things that originates what you are pleased to term the casual labourer. Government itself is a sinner in this respect, taking up every year a number of smart lads in the Post and Telegraph Department, for instance, who, for the most part, after a few years' service, find themselves adrift to swell the ranks of "casuals," ending as the "unfit." Britain surely might do better than that by the rising generation!

Let me quote from an address to Munich school authorities delivered by the president of the said labour bureau:—

"Experience proves that the time of leaving school is the most critical moment concerning the formation of character in the young. Unless the educational work of the school is to be rendered altogether abortive, the authorities should set themselves to the task of directing boys and girls to suitable careers. For, as a training agency, it is not merely the duty of a school to teach the children certain knowledge; it should qualify them for their future vocations, it should take an intelligent interest in the occupations chosen by them, and should prove this interest by helpfully guiding their choice. In order to do so efficiently, an amount of knowledge of the labour market is required, which they can best obtain in touch with the

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civic labour bureaux. To these institutions teachers should direct their scholars, after impressing them with the infinite importance of the right choice of occupation at the very outset of a worker's life."

One need scarcely point out that the aims here set forth must be the aims of the above suggested training colonies; and in these days of Education Bills, one may offer these golden words (spoken by a professional town councillor !) to the thoughtful consideration of the wise men who guide the destinies of this country.

There is hardly a town in Germany but has its labour bureau of the kind above described, some being purely municipal, as at Munich, others managed by executives under the trade unions and industrial boards, yet assisted and supervised by the town council, both employers and working men having a voice in the management. The German labour bureaux, of which there are hundreds, annually negotiate employment for six to seven hundred thousand workers. In certain parts of South Germany, not only is the machinery subsidised by the State, but telephone, telegraph and postal communication are placed *free* at the service of the labour agency. Let me call the special attention of a British Government to this ! Does it not show how the word "national," if really understood and applied, meets all national needs ?

These bureaux, besides their *primâ facie* usefulness, often do good work in acting as boards of conciliation in the event of strikes. These, however, are much less frequent in Germany, just because labour is more organised and a "living wage" more secure. It is a proof of the fundamental value of the labour bureau movement in Germany, that it has succeeded in



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bringing together apparently opposing interests. Trade unions and individual guild registries have joined in the municipal effort, and practically the entire work of labour mediation in any city is thus unified.

And this would seem to show the way for Britain. You could never extinguish private enterprise, nor would it be well to attempt it. Only set forth the national ideal! Form a centre round which it can gather, and you will arrive at a British unified system in which the component parts derive new vigour from the simple fact that individual effort is, not quelled, but quickened and strengthened by **union**. That centre is none other than the civic and national principle! The whole is greater than the part; the city therefore transcends individual citizens. But, again, the city is nothing but individual citizens forming an integral whole. When one comes to dissect it, surely the objection to "municipalising" existing in some minds here would seem to be of shadowy origin, a misconceived word. As an idea the thing is irrefutable; its name somehow is debased through its associations. If you could find another expression for this same thing, something which does not smack of "town council," something to strike the popular mind as a newly-conceived powerful fact, it would catch on like wildfire and its success would be assured. For everything is ready, the nation's longing for a solution is great—so great that it is surpassed only by the appalling need. The truth is, all Britain is waiting for a leader, a man of enterprise and true ideals, and him all Britain would follow; for it is sick unto death of its guides that are no guides, its gods that are no gods.

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## THE ECONOMIC UPLIFTING OF ENGLAND—EMPLOYMENT

One of your recent utterances, as reported in the daily press, has greatly struck me. You replied to some deputation, Sir, that "no new opening for work [*i.e.*, for the unemployed] had yet presented itself." But is it not a case that he who seeks shall find? Without falling back on such enterprises as afforestation and the reclaiming of foreshores, which have before now been mooted, and which surely await the wise decisions of Government, I can—before taking up the matter more seriously—point to a very simple and quite fertile field of labour for a small army of work-seekers.

London has its cab service; why has it no organised messenger or street porter brigade? German cities these fifty years have had what is known as the "*Dienstmänner Institut*," literally rendered, Institute of Serving Men—town runners, that is. If you go about Germany you will find at every conspicuous street corner men stationed, some with barrows, some without, ready to run your errands for you. They will do anything from carrying a bouquet to your lady-love to moving your house furniture. They form not only an institution, but also one under authority, like your London cabs. The men wear badges, and have their rules laid down, one of which is that, just like a cab, they must not, if disengaged, refuse any call. The result is that German townsfolk are conveniently served. The charges in German medium-sized cities are something like threepence for an errand by hand, sixpence if a barrow is required, while any job requiring a number of men engaged by the hour, or even day, such as furniture moving, has to

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be arranged for at the central office of the Institute. The general results are obvious: quite a number of men appear to make a very satisfactory living—at any rate, these *Dienstmänner* invariably look both physically and otherwise “fit”—and one is never at a loss in a German city how to get a thing done quickly and reasonably, as often enough one is here.

Of course, you could not straightway harness your London loafer to even such occupation. Here we come again upon the absolute need of training even for such an apparently humble vocation as that of “town runner.” A German *Dienstmann* can be trusted with quite confidential business, trusted with money too; for he is not a stray unit, but a member of an organisation, and, as such, answerable to the community.

A *Dienstmann* is but an unskilled labourer, true, but not a casual one. He is at his post, year in year out, and sure of his living—an honest wage honestly got. And what a boon he is to the public!

Now I have only mentioned this in order to show that there is work at every street corner, so to speak, if only you look for it and organise it. Everybody here is so used to the state of things—a surprisingly deplorable state for a great nation, a practical people, which Britons claim to be—so used to bad conditions that we jog along as blind as moles though reforms stare us in the face and quite easily could be set going, if only as a nation we would learn to act nationally. For let me proclaim on the housetop, though a *Dienstmann* is a *desideratum*, there are far more valuable “avenues of labour” awaiting busy hands and feet, both as regards the unemployed and the prosperity of the nation at large!

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## BRITISH WATERWAYS

Sir, this country has carried some 240 million pounds to South Africa for the waging of a war which certainly has not yielded that much of tangible gain. If but the odd forty millions of this vast sum could have been devoted to home improvements, see what it might mean! \*

In travelling between this British country of my adoption and that part of South Germany where, although a British-born subject, yet of German parentage, I spent my early days, I have these thirty years noticed a growing activity of the Rhine transport. Any one passing to and fro between England and Westphalia (say, to visit the Colony of Mercy, or the city of Elberfeld) may register, without going much out of his way, the same ever-increasing shipping facilities. There is, for instance, an inland harbour (at Ruhrort) constructed on behalf of the mercantile interests of that industrial centre which has sprung into prominence within these same thirty years—a harbour which proudly claims to stand favourable comparison with any shipping place in the world, not excepting London. Ruhrort harbour within a quarter of a century has more than quadrupled its traffic. A canal has been built—the Dortmund-Ems Canal—to connect the Rhine with a German sea outlet (Emden),

\* Of course, neither this nor certain other sections of the Open Letter specially concern the Local Government Board. It is addressed to the man who apparently is seeking “new openings for work”—a man known to be keenly interested in the question of the unemployed! This Open Letter is pleading with the British Government as such; it appeals to the nation which returns and supports its Government. And the symbol of the nation's unity is the Crown!



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nearly 170 miles long, having a depth of over eight feet for the carrying of Rhine vessels of a thousand tons. Four millions, *i.e.*, about £25,000 per mile, have been spent on its construction.

Compare with this the fact that a British Government could not see its way\* to set about improving the Thames docks, with the result that of late years great business firms (Yarrow's for instance) have removed or are removing their works, throwing thousands of East Londoners out of employment.

But having noticed on repeated journeyings that Rhine activity and Rhenish Westphalian enterprise, one naturally inquired further. I found that there has been an enormous development of German water carriage by river and canal ever since Bismarck emphasised, in the 'seventies, the national importance of cheap transport. Not only the Rhine, but all great German rivers have been subdued and harnessed to the requirements of trade. Rocks have been blasted away in the Rhine bed, quays and harbours have been built and equipped according to the most modern scientific and technical attainments. These harbours, for instance, are worked by electrical machinery so that ships can be lightered in the space of hours where formerly days were needed, and goods transferred direct from steamer or barge to train—by suction in the case of cereals, including automatic weighing—without tedious shoulder carriage. I have watched these proceedings curiously long before England's need came home to me, and any Rhine tourist can make his own observations anywhere between Strassburg and Holland. Other great rivers,

\* It is but late amends that a "London Ports and Docks Bill" now is promised.

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such as the Elbe and Oder, have been similarly improved. Tributary streams have been brought into line. Thus, to name one only, the Main of my young days was a sluggish stream we children, in seasons of drought, could almost wade across; it has been deepened to a depth of eight feet (at a cost of £400,000), enabling Rhine vessels to serve the Frankfort trade. Carlsruhe—which in my schooldays was a sleepy little grand-ducal residence, but since has quintupled its inhabitants and now is a stirring modern city which I scarcely recognise, revisiting it after the lapse of years—has built a canal of some six miles, connecting itself with the Rhine. So have other cities, up and down the country; for municipal governments in Germany, while unable to waste the ratepayers' money, as unfortunately is quite possible in Britain, are never lacking in enterprise for the true honour and economic advance of a city. They have a progressive, if prudent, nation behind them. The result is that German industries are now served by the most splendid system of waterways; and, not content with this achievement, great as it is, stupendous further undertakings are designed. Germany during the last quarter of a century, at a cost of some thirty millions sterling, has constructed or reconstructed not far short of a thousand miles of canals, besides the extensive river improvements. A million has been spent on the Rhine-bed alone. But a vast additional project is on foot, viz., a Rhine-Elbe Canal, an Elbe-Danube Canal, a Danube-Oder Canal, estimated in its completion to cost quite another thirty millions. A glance at the map will show how this river-connecting water-route will add to the nation's transport facilities. Whatever, therefore, the

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expenditure it will prove a paying enterprise. Indeed, while I am correcting this for press I note an announcement in my morning paper of a "great new German scheme"—viz., the deepening and widening of the Kaiser-Wilhelm Canal which connects the North Sea with the Baltic. The work is estimated to take ten years and to cost ten millions sterling. This canal, opened twelve years ago, has a surface breadth of 90 feet, it has locks varying in length up to 470 feet, but both the German Admiralty and the leaders of the mercantile marine see need for improvement. Behold German progressiveness, yet the Fatherland is looked upon as a poor country compared with Britain! The German inland fleet has increased from a tonnage of one-and-a-half millions to nearly five millions—a fleet not made of small boats like your British barges. Comparison is odious; but when you reflect that the cost of transport stands in inverse ratio to the tonnage of vessels, you will perceive that not only time, but size even, is money! These German waterways enable German agriculturists and German industrials to forward goods at freight charges which must send British producers into sorrowful jealousy! On the great rivers, owing to large transport vessels and despite the heavy initial outlay, freight rates would seem merely nominal. I see them quoted from one-sixth to one-tenth of a penny per ton a mile. These almost incredible figures presuppose barges of a thousand tons and upwards; they are now in force on all waterways equipped with such craft and, if prediction is correct, these rates will be conspicuously lessened—some say by as much as one-half—as soon as the canal service, now steadily progressing, shall have reached the completeness aimed at. Poor Britain

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has no barges of a thousand tons ! One has visions of her humble canal craft of twenty, fifty, very rarely a hundred tons, crawling along such stagnant inland waterways as she still possesses, dragged by a tired horse which is led by a more tired child, where German barges of a thousand, and even two thousand tons and over, float proudly, two, three or more *en queue* behind a steam tug.

These are startling facts, Sir ; but you and other readers may be wondering what I am driving at. I shall be coming to the point presently. Yet I beg you to observe what a government can do, and does, when it works for the economic advancement of a country. True, Britain has no rivers like the Rhine and the Elbe ; but the Thames might long ere now have been skilfully improved, science stepping in where Nature fails, and the East London docks should never have been left to illustrate decay.

What of German railways ? Listen, Sir ; and listen, you British readers.

Originally the monopoly of companies, even as is the case here, or the property of disunited States, German railways have become Imperial since Bismarck's far-sighted policy laid down the principle that a railroad is a public road existing for the common good. The net result is that the *Kaiserliche Stats-Eisenbahnen* have outdone your British railways, first, in mere mileage per ten thousand inhabitants ; second, in rolling stock and stations : where in all Britain is there a station to compare with that of Cologne, Frankfort, or Stuttgart ?—cities these which a proud Londoner deigns to consider equal to a tithe of his own metropolis ; third, in cheap and convenient travelling ; fourth, in punctuality and



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safety to life and limb—trains on the average being certainly not slower than here, and on the whole more comfortable ; fifth, overtopping all this—in cash returns ! The Prussian Railway Department, for instance, now yields a full 7 per cent., half of which goes to pay the interest on loans, the other half flowing into the Exchequer, thus coming back to the ratepayer in an agreeable lessening of taxes.

But more : not only is travelling cheaper, railway carriage is cheap.

Here we come upon Bismarck's tariff reform, which was laid down on the principle that all German countries must equally participate, so that each locality can develop its resources, agricultural or industrial, German home products being carried more cheaply than foreign imports. If this is a tax on British producers, let them reflect that nevertheless their goods are carried at cheaper freight charges in Germany than on their own British lines ! *It is the British railways and their extortionate freight rates*, and not Bismarck's Home Protection, which have ruined British agriculture and are fast ruining certain of your industries.

Here we discover one great reason why Germany has become so formidable a rival to Britain !

Take agriculture. Crops, even within twenty or thirty miles of London, often cannot be converted into money because it does not pay to bring them to market. The poor producer, say a market gardener, has first of all to pay a toll to his landlord, called rent ; second, an equally heavy toll to the railways, called freight, the cost of the article to the consumer being still further enhanced by a ducal ground-landlord's levy on Covent Garden Market — which presses on every potato, every

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cabbage, every apple bought by the Londoner. Yet Londoners are free Britons in a free country—or think they are.

No wonder agriculture sighs heavily in this country, British vested interests merrily sucking its life-blood ; and there is no Bismarck to see that this means the ruin of national prosperity.

Now British railways could thus handicap agriculture and industries *only after they had destroyed British waterways*, the canals, which were, in the early years of Queen Victoria, unsurpassed in Europe. The railways, in the strength of their rising greatness, bought up the disunited canal property, studiously brought it to decay, there being nothing left now of former glory but stagnant ditches—some thousands of miles in length, it is true, which shows that they could be revived, that is, deepened and otherwise brought up to modern requirement, but at present not fit to be mentioned when measured by what Germany has produced in artificial waterways.

There is even more of British railway oppression—to wit, what is known as “preferential tariffs.” A British railway, being practically its own master, can make what charges it pleases—at any rate it mostly makes them despite the Board of Trade. It actually will carry foreign imports cheaper than home products, considerably cheaper ! The British producer must either submit to British monopolist freight charges or is left stranded ; the foreigner must be cajoled to enter—thus argues your railway director. Now these things are known—felt at least by the suffering Briton ; but his Government, apparently, sees no cause for interference.

Not so Bismarck. In transforming German

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railways on the policy of State Socialism, he laid down the principle of a uniform tariff according to which goods, all over the empire, are carried at equal rates. In Britain a man able to secure large consignments can influence a railway company; in Germany such a one enjoys no privilege, thus small producers are fostered. Tariffs in Germany are not only uniform and framed with a view to furthering local resources, calling forth local enterprise, but they are transparently clear and methodically simple. Any one can calculate in a moment the standard rate for any distance. Bismarck made it impossible that "preferential rates" should benefit, say, certain large cities as might suit certain railway companies, leaving other localities ill served. He declared private railways far more injurious to the common good than had been the old coaching monopoly, for they are endowed with greater powers; and showed that only a universal State railway system could effectively protect public interests. In 1879 the Imperial Government bought up all private lines, and, practically uniting the railways of the federate States, brought them under central management, thus doing away with much wasteful expenditure caused by a multiplicity of Boards. And while the wages of German railway servants have steadily increased, while passenger and freight rates have steadily lessened, railway property having trebled within a few years, yet owing to the improved uniform management profits have increased till they now stand at 7 per cent., which, after paying the interest due upon loans, leaves an annual gain to the Exchequer (in Prussia alone!) of some ten million pounds.

But the paramount gain is to be seen in the result that the Imperial system of State railways has



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contributed largely to the rise of German industries, has doubled and trebled the chances of agriculture—and this despite the fact that it did not repress (as was the case in Britain) but rather worked into the hands of a sister transport by waterways which blossomed into prosperity *pari passu* with the railways.

Thus both agriculture and industries could expand in Germany and have expanded, well served by a dual system of cheap carriage, which does not exist, primarily, for its own enrichment but as a servant of the public good, yet flourishing astonishingly on this principle. It is State Socialism justified by its results. A great deal more could be said for the Imperial railways and their superiority, but enough has been given to show up the destructive policy pursued here.

True, one does not always like the masterfulness of German railway officials ordering individual passengers about like schoolboys. On the other hand, travelling is infinitely safer on the Continent than here. Accidents like those at Witham, Salisbury, Grantham, with their terrible loss of life, startled this country within a twelvemonth. I have not heard of a similar disaster in Germany this many a year. And if the individual now and again is repressed, the common good is never lost sight of. The ultimate end of Bismarck's policy was to secure the rise of German industries so that they might hold their own. And the result, known to every British manufacturer, is, not only that they now do "hold their own," but are coming uncomfortably near to ousting Britishers from their legitimate "preserves." The lesson is obvious : it is high time, surely, to examine into causes.

It is also true that, owing to one or two other British methods and ways which at bottom spell loss, one can



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buy certain commodities cheaper in London than in any German city. But not everything is gold that glitters, and not every article sold cheap betokens prosperity.

Regarding travelling experiences, I can give one or two of my own. A German station official indeed may order you about, marshalling you to your train, not permitting you as much as to open a compartment for yourself—which, I grant, grates on British feelings; but it never happens in Imperial Germany what befell me in an English country town the other day where I arrived about five minutes after the train for my further destination had steamed away. Consulting the respective time-tables, I found that train A was actually booked to arrive two minutes after train B was out of the station. I was left stranded for three mortal hours seeking to unravel the mystery why sister (or rival) companies should thus serve a traveller!

As a set-off to this compare the following: I was at Bielefeld wanting to make a journey to Davos. Bent on economy, I was planning a *Rundreise* (circular route), travelling to Davos *viâ* Stuttgart and the Lake of Constance, returning *viâ* the Falls of Schaffhausen and the Black Forest. They have a *Reichs-Cours-Buch*, viz., the combined time-tables of all Germany, giving every line and every train; and, used to your British "Cassell" or "A.B.C.," I was poring somewhat helplessly over its plenitude of information on the eve of my departure, seeking to fit trains, when a local friend came to the rescue, saying, "Oh, we do things better than that! Let me look out your route. You go to the station to-morrow. I'll see that you find your ticket waiting." Off he went, leaving me wondering. But the following morning at ten he reappeared,

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informing me that he had telegraphed early to the nearest provincial head department, Hanover, ordering my ticket. He showed me his wire to this effect: "Combined ticket Sutter passenger Bielefeld 12.15 third; Cologne 4.45 second; Mayence,"—and so forth. Not only had he wired every stage of my route and every train, including the boat service, but wherever an express carried third class instead of the usual second, he gave me the benefit of that. It was the most cunningly explicit telegram, at a couple of marks.

I took myself and luggage to the station a few minutes before the train was due (in London one is apt to allow twenty minutes to half-an-hour for starting comfortably on a long journey). I presented myself at the booking-office and said "Sutter." "Certainly," replied the clerk, showing me a wire to hand stating the ticket (really a collection of tickets) had been forwarded by the very train I was to board, and naming the sum I had to pay. As the train steamed in I walked up to the chief guard, quite confident now, and again said "Sutter." "Certainly," responded he, producing my booklet of tickets and handing me to a compartment. There I had fully four hours to reflect on "travelling made easy." At Cologne the old guard reappeared, saying, "There are just five minutes to catch the train south, and here is a man to help you along." Any British tourist who has travelled in Germany will bear me out that Cologne station is a maze in which pretty nearly all London termini could be housed and yet leave room. My guide took me down a flight of stairs, along some underground passages, and up a lift—there was my train. My luggage I never saw: it turned up all right at my destination. Everything

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tallied, everywhere I found corresponding trains, reaching the Lake of Constance at the nick of time for the boat, and finding the Swiss railways just as fitting, I reached Davos to the minute. Eight weeks later I had an equally prosperous return journey, arriving at Bielefeld on the day, the hour, the very minute that had been set down two months before. I had journeyed over a thousand miles, second class largely, and all this at something under £4. It would have cost me at least £6 had I travelled English fashion, booking separately by the respective lines. Nor was there need to rush straight ahead; the journey could be broken at the traveller's pleasure. To invent a parallel, it was about the same as though residing at Brighton, I had telegraphed early one morning to a central railway department in London (which does not exist) requesting the arrival by noon of a combination ticket enabling one to travel *viâ* Portsmouth, Bristol, Manchester or Liverpool to Glasgow, thence round by the Western Highlands through Caledonian Canal to Inverness and Aberdeen, returning *viâ* Edinburgh, York and London. This, too, roughly, is something over a thousand miles. Should I have had it, second and third class combined, at £4? Above all, would the desired ticket have reached me at Brighton at such short notice? Would a simple traveller dare to ask as much? And could one hope the trains at all main junctions would fit? Would one not be told here, "My good madam, you expect impossibilities"? The explanation of this difference between the two countries is, that there is central management in Germany, ruled by a capable head, as against your fifty or more boards of directors here. Of course the guiding mind in Germany

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is assisted by a staff of experts, trained specially for their posts, whereas a British railway director as a rule is some lord, or some prosperous trade magnate, appointed under favour of private interests, heaven knows how.

As I left the Bielefeld platform, there stood my friend.

"It is marvellous," I exclaimed, "just marvellous! Never a hitch anywhere!" I felt, and indeed was, handed along with the punctuality of a registered letter.

"Marvellous?" he echoed. "This is *das deutsche Reich*!"

No wonder they are proud of their *deutsches Reich* (Imperial Germany) which, if it has them in hand—where an Englishman, not knowing any better, would turn up his nose and cry, "Restraint!"—also serves them in ways undreamt-of in this country. It is solidarity *versus* individualism. It is the "common good" *versus* individual benefit, yet see how the individual benefit is increased by the common good! For the rest, it is because Germany—from her railways to the highest State department—is ruled by *experts*, by men appointed for their understanding, their special knowledge, their training, their experience (and not, as here, for their party position, their social standing, or their power to push to the front); it is this which has scored these marvellous German successes, now only beginning to be known here, only beginning to alarm British critics. Yes, England had better look to her laurels!

Now the above is merely a private passenger's chance experience. German merchants and producers, one and all, will have similar accounts of the cargo department.



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Imperial Germany has indeed an ascendancy over the individual German, has him "in hand," as you say. But the individual German has discovered—at least, if he is a sensible German—that only by individual surrender can there be secured any lasting greatness of the commonwealth. So he surrenders on lesser points knowing that the very prosperity of his "*deutsches Reich*" flows back to him in a hundred individual benefits.

Is it too late in the day to teach Britons some of the advantages of solidarity?

Nearly three thousand years ago, a wise Roman propounded the fable of the Stomach and the Members, showing that if the members will be individual units and self-rulers, woe betide the body! Individualism is good—within bounds. At times it is a fine thing even. It produces, for instance, a General Gordon—such a one would scarcely be possible under German rule. But for the great mass of the people, who are not embryo Gordons, too much personal liberty is a pitfall. It has in this country resulted in the evils which you, Sir, like every true leader, would give your right hand to amend.

British individualism too often means "Every man for himself, and the devil take the hindmost."

But I have strayed from my subject. I was showing that British railways, having ruined agriculture, are seriously endangering your industries. Is there no help? Why not call in once more a wholesome competition by redeveloping the British waterways? If Germany could spend some thirty millions sterling on providing cheap water transport, and is planning more, why could not Britain? The sum named would give Britain a canal service which for usefulness

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would be equal to any on the Continent. Even at the rate of £25,000 per mile—which amount could not fairly be spent here on canal improvements, considering that the geographical advantages are all on Britain's side and distances short as compared with Germany—see what a length of deepened and broadened canals this would yield, a network of waterways covering all your country! For Germany, though she has fine rivers, had to tame them at enormous cost; she had to make canals, often of great length, and in the face of topographical difficulties. Her centres of trade mostly are far from the seaboard, her export industries being carried on from one hundred to three hundred miles inland. Clearly, Britain is better situated, if she would but improve her chances. It is indeed not the German natural advantages; it is German wide-awakeness and German enterprise, coupled with thoroughness of training, which have outdone Britain.

Therefore re-create your waterways. No doubt the railway interest would cry out here, but it will have to be told, in Bismarck's words, that railways exist for the country, and not the country for railways. Yet, if Germany's experience is a parallel, no railway shareholder need be afraid, since the above quoted 7 per cent. is nearly double the average British dividend.

Here is an instructive bit just culled from the daily paper:—

“The general manager of the ——— Railway Company, in giving evidence before the Royal Commission on Canals and Waterways, said that the canals had been hopelessly outclassed by railways. Railways were a far superior mode of conveyance and distribution. Traders preferred to deal with one

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carrier who could provide quick and reliable transport throughout the country." This artless manager naturally wears the spectacles of the monopoly. It is to be hoped the Royal Commission will put on the lenses of economic expedience and report accordingly! Is it too much to suggest that the Commission should not report without taking German evidence, with its own eyes, on the spot?

The foregoing reasonings, no doubt, will rouse the rejoinder in certain quarters that Britain has her own natural waterway, being a sea-girt island. True; but her sea-carriage does not make up for deficiency inland. London should certainly be connected by canal transport—direct or indirect, by such canals as above described—with every trading inland city, and with every agricultural district. But, indeed, not even your seaboard towns are anything like served by sea-carriage! I have, for instance, never observed that such populous places as Brighton or Bournemouth get their supply of coal by means of coaling vessels; it is taken to them on railway trucks. In Macaulay's history one reads of London using "sea-coal," that is sea-borne coal; now it is "rail-coal," paid for as such; and here is signal proof for what is said above! Further, if German cities like Frankfort and Carlsruhe could connect themselves with the Rhine, and if this river could be joined with a German sea outlet (giving Holland the slip) by a costly, yet remunerative, canal 170 miles in length and eight feet deep, what reason is there why every British inland trading city should not bring the sea to its doors; also link itself with every other mercantile city by an effective canal service? If these suggestions were intelligently carried out,

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British industries and British agriculture would have a tale to tell worth hearing !

But more still—and we are now coming to the point.

What did you say, Sir,—that there was no new avenue of work for the unemployed within the ken of his Majesty's ministers? Might it not be reserved for the present Government to start redeveloping the British waterways, and thus kill two birds with one stroke? For here, indeed, is a glorious new "avenue of labour" which might well rejoice your manly heart—an enterprise wholly for the nation's economic advancement and yielding steady employment for multitudes; first in the making and then in the working of this water service, an occupation which for healthiness stands far and away above factory work, affording a remedy at the same time for your dying agriculture and the revival of your failing industries.

Sir, if it were a question of the unemployed alone, the elevation of the submerged masses, a Government might gladly devote whatever millions are needed for a radical solution; but when it means the uplifting of Britain herself, fitting her anew for a just rivalry in the world competition of trade, what patriot could hesitate? The present talk is of twenty or twenty-six millions annually from the Exchequer for the finding of those deplorably-planned old age pensions. According to the German example it should scarcely take twice that amount of initial capital outlay to fit out Britain once and for good with a powerful inland canal system !

So may one not hope that these humble hints will not only fire your own practical mind, seeing that you are a worker born and bred, but also kindle the



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imagination of the veriest armchair politicians, if there are such at present in power?

Did I not say that the great problem is wheel within wheel, link joined to link? Yet on the link just now disclosed hangs a mighty national rejuvenescence, a re-birth of Britain. It means Britain's return to the greatness she believes her inheritance, and which is fast slipping from her, so in heaven's name let a patriotic Government go forward!

As regards tariff reform pure and simple, your correspondent's opinion is neither here nor there. Bismarck used to say: "British free trade is good, very good—for *Germany*," and thereupon he set himself to give his people their splendid transport facilities. He that runs may read. Possibly the vexed question would right itself quite naturally if Britain remade her own decayed carrying trades—re-creating her canals and wisely guiding her railways. When the British farmer, the British manufacturer, can send goods along at a farthing per mile per ton and considerably under, as now is the case in Germany, you can laugh at foreign competition.

Truly it is ignorance which is a nation's worst enemy. Not ninety-nine in a hundred of those who here groan and bear intolerable burdens will be aware of the real cause; and a long-suffering people not only sends landlords to Parliament, but they return the very railway directors by the score to preserve things in happy *statu quo*. No wonder the nation groans!

These political and economic asides are merely *en passant*. This is an Open Letter concerning the problem of the poor, suggesting remedies regarding the unemployed. I trust, Sir, you will never again say to any deputation that work cannot be found.

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Let Government, like a wise householder, develop home resources, giving free scope to every British pair of hands, and your bugbear of a social trouble will vanish as mists before the morning. The Empire will take care of itself, if only the Kingdom is wisely governed. The mischief is that for many a long year governing has been tantamount to leaving individual greed unmolested. The greatest of all teachers has said, "No house can stand which is divided against itself"—no, not even Britain while governing means the adjusting of power between Liberals and Conservatives.

It is worth noting that when Bismarck created his famous protective tariff he broke at the same time the monopoly of individual railways, transforming them into the majestic German State Railways as now existing. And it is most curious that while thus creating a gigantic State monopoly, he yet saw fit to develop the waterways in the manner shown; the State thus apparently calling up competition against itself, or, at least, rivalry within its own departments. But this teaches the lesson that true interests never clash; it is only self-interest which clashes with everything around it, and to its own ultimate discomfiture. British railways destroyed all other modes of inland transport, yet British railway directors can, on an average, never "divide" more than about half the amount of German railway profits. He that runs may read!

Is it so very un-English to suggest State railways, or, at least, State-supervised companies? Has not the Post Office with considerable advantage become a State department, followed by the telegraph service; the telephone about to become "national," too?

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As a strictly veracious reporter of German economic advancement, one is bound to add that the German transport facilities alone could not have done it! The central fact is, first of all, German education and thoroughness; and, second, that patriotism which sets itself to train the working power of the nation. For a nation's most precious asset is the *labour of its people*, and while Britain leaves vast masses not only unemployed, but unfit to be employed, she need not hope she can vie with modern Germany. A true Briton, and one truly educated, is as fine a specimen of humanity as ever honoured the Creator. All the more deplorable it is that British sons and daughters by the hundred thousand are left to chance development, and to an unequal fight with unrighteous conditions. It means national loss of the gravest import, and here culminates the whole problem.

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To return to worklessness, which is *the* question vexing your mind, let me recapitulate what the recreating of British waterways would do. It would, first, yield profitable employment for hundreds of thousands, and for long years—for navvies, in the first instance, which would suit your present army of the unskilled. But collateral work would at once spring up in vast dimensions. Second, it would presently provide occupation for a large body of inland “marines,” commonly called bargemen, only these would have to be something more smart than the present canal-faring tribe. There would again be much collateral freight work. Nor is this all. For the inland fleet thousands of craft will have to be built and kept in repair; so this means, third, new activities



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in shipbuilding yards, and it again means no end of collateral employment for supplying these yards with timber, with metal requirements and what not—an abundance of work. Nor yet is this all, for the newly-created transport facilities would powerfully stimulate British industries, a demand for efficient operatives would spring up everywhere, and your colonies, your training places could probably not fill the vacancies fast enough. Further, it would not only tell on skilled and unskilled labour, requiring every willing pair of hands, but the rising industries would call other workers into the field, absorbing the now postless clerk, the man “too old at forty.” It would, lastly, incite general education, for the competing industries would have to meet Germany with her own weapons, which are—*fitness and thoroughness and knowledge.*

I shall have occasion to speak of the advantages of higher education further on, but before quitting the subject of waterways I would point to the need of a bye-law making it absolutely impossible for barges to add to the nation's “unfit,” as still is the case. There was, indeed, legislation concerning bargemen's families some years ago; but apparently laws can be broken, for women and children are still found on these floating hovels, and that not on holiday trips. See how the young can be worked! There was a case in the papers quite recently, describing a small maiden of eleven doing the work of a man in unlocking and relocking the canal gates, and when sympathetically spoken to she said: “Lor', sir, I have been a-doing this ever since I were nine!”

It is a fact that wherever I look in this country I still find children—barge children, tramp children, factory children—Britain's little ones by the thousand



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left to neglect. Yes, wherever one looks ! And does one not see the punishment Britain is laying up for herself ? Surely a wise Government in future will put a stop to this waste of human life, this wholesale ill-usage of the nation's young.

A bargeman's family might fitly be settled on an allotment somewhere on the shore of the waterway he plies. If this is according to present law, then one wants to see that law carried out, one wants to see these homes ! There is dairy work, there are fowl raising, bee-keeping, pig-fattening ; there are a score of things a woman can see to, assisted more or less by her growing children—the family thus leading a healthy life and a useful life, a gain to themselves and a gain to the country, while the chief bread-winner would be away. What villages could be founded, what happy homes made, if only this country would rise to the “cry of the children !”

Here we trench on the land question, but so, indeed, does the making of any new canals ! If such are to be of real national advantage, any “compensations” must be ruled by common sense, and the land for their construction must not be acquired, as was the case with your British railways, at fancy prices. In other words the land must be valued on national lines and not at a landowner's desire for enrichment. When British railways were made, private greed saw its opportunity, and had its way. Land thus had to be acquired by the companies at blackmail cost, and this is one reason why their dividends to this day are not in keeping with their receipts. A wise Parliament will have to rule in the matter on broad national expediency, and if this were to hurry forward the re-shaping of British land laws, British land tenure—well, this

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consummation is bound to come, sooner or later, and the sooner the better !

I had written these pages, when turning to the "Encyclopædia Britannica" (vol. xxvi.), I find some interesting reading *re* British waterways, enough at least to support all that is said above. Permit me to quote concerning the Manchester Ship Canal—which is not, properly speaking, an inland waterway, but in every other respect it yields conclusive evidence. Having been mooted for half a century and longer—strenuously opposed by the railway interest, of course—it became a splendid reality at last, and was opened by Queen Victoria in 1894. A few years later the "Encyclopædia" could report thus—the italics being the present writer's :

"The traffic on this canal has increased from 925,659 tons in 1894 to 2,778,108 in 1899. After its opening *considerable reductions were made in the railway rates and in charges at the Liverpool docks in order to meet the lower cost of conveyance by shipping passing up it (i.e., taking cargoes from the sea to Manchester without transshipment).* The result has been of great advantage to the trade of Lancashire and the surrounding districts, and *the saving in the cost of carriage, estimated at £700,000 a year, assists manufacturers to meet the competition of their foreign opponents who have the advantage of low rates of carriage in the improved waterways of America, Germany, France and Belgium.* Before the construction of the canal *large works had left Manchester and had established themselves at ports like Glasgow where they could save the cost of inland carriage.* Since its opening *new industries have been started at Manchester, and along its banks, warehouses and*

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mills that were empty are now occupied, while *nearly ten thousand new houses have been built for the accommodation of the workpeople required to meet the enlarged trade of the city.*"

Indeed, the whole of this quotation should be printed in italics, and proclaimed from the house-tops, for what more striking evidence could you find? The wonder is that with such an example in your own country, this Open Letter should be required as a sign-post to direct British politicians to a sure way for dealing effectively with unemployment and restoring to Britain herself her own lost ground as an industrial power! The Manchester Canal is but thirty-five and a half miles in length, yet its construction furnished employment for years to many thousands of navvies. It has brought all the collateral work I have pointed out as a likely result, for within five years ten thousand new houses were required for the workpeople flocking to the newly-started industries! Its cost, totalling some fifteen millions (including various heavy "compensations") certainly greatly outdoes all German precedent, yet despite this enormous expenditure nothing but brilliant success seems the outcome—a gain to the community if not to shareholders; which only proves the contention that transport highways should be national undertakings. A study of comparative cost might with advantage be instituted; it would, no doubt, yield some instructive discoveries!

Let Britain address herself to a prudent remaking of her ancient inland waterways and find her own great reward.

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# Britain's Hope

## AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY

On that journey into Switzerland already mentioned, I travelled thither through the Kingdom of Würtemberg, returning by way of the Grand Duchy of Baden. Both these countries, making up the south-western corner of Germany, are practically my home country, my father's family hailing from Baden, my grandmother's (originally Huguenots) from Würtemberg; myself, though a British-born subject, growing up at Carlsruhe, the grand-ducal capital. I thus know these two countries as well as I know Britain, the land of my adoption and almost life-long residence.

Sir, these two countries can be described as one flourishing market-garden—any tourist can see as much, either from his railway train, or, better still, if he should take a walking tour by the golden cornfields, the fruit-laden orchards, the vineyards luscious with ripening grapes. Nature has been lavish in those regions, crowning the hills with splendid timber, and the lowlands with harvests rich and rare. There are progressive industries, too, as there naturally would be when industry and thrift are ingrained in the people, as is the case in those fertile regions.

It is not the climate, however, which can be named as the main source of prosperity, for the winters are severe and the soil frost-bound for long weeks, even months. A six-weeks' frost on end seemed a natural thing to us skate- or slide-loving youngsters. If the country is rich in nature's bounties, these do not drop into your lap as in a fairy-tale, but have to be won by men's hardy toil—and women's, too. A sturdy race of peasants people the hundreds of villages, owning their homesteads and their fields; it is they who have



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turned the land into one smiling garden. You see, Sir, the fields they till, the orchards and vineyards they tend, the hillsides even, where they fell giant trees, are *theirs*, and this makes all the difference !

When I look back to those early years there stands out a memory. There was not, and I daresay there is not now, a single greengrocer's shop in all Carlsruhe, nor yet a dairy, *i.e.*, milk shop—the same being the case in all other German towns of my acquaintance.

One is up betimes in a German city ; the boys are due at school in the summer by seven mostly, the girls by eight, and it was no unusual thing for us to take a walk, or even the train, for a Rhine bath before that early school hour. Being thus up and about with the young day one saw the peasant folk from the neighbouring villages stream into the town in the golden morning hours, the men with carts, the women with baskets or other loads. By eight o'clock the market would be in full swing, and the ladies of the town, mothers or grown daughters, would come tripping along to buy provisions at first hand. It is quite "ladylike" in those unspoiled cities to carry a basketful of vegetables, fruit, or anything else of a morning. One got to know the peasant wives and their wares, and knew exactly where to go for any article in that crowded market, the vendors looking for you and hailing you with a broad smile, not to say grin. Those market-mornings are an experience, a picture, even an education, to be had to this day.

It means that producer and consumer meet daily, year in year out, without middlemen, without extortionate railway freights or tolls to any landlord. A groat or so (*octroi*) is paid for permission to sell in the

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market-place; I know of no other device robbing a hard-working people of their award. Now here is one reason why agriculture is a gain-yielding pursuit in Germany. The peasantry everywhere, holding their own land, have a city or town or townlet within easy reach to exchange their produce for coin. As for milk, eggs, butter, every town household deals with some peasant wife direct whose daughter or farm lass will bring a canful of milk to your door, by six in the morning, going the round of her few customers quite in time for your boys' and girls' early breakfast. The same with butter and eggs, unless you prefer to carry them home from the market. This is all very simple—is it not?—but it pays! And how fresh one gets the green stuff, the dew of the morning being upon it when it reaches your kitchen. It pays the producer, pays the country—since a country's finest possession is an independent peasantry—and it certainly pays the consumer, for one gives in Germany about as many pfennig for a cabbage or lettuce as one pays here in ha'pence—a pfennig being one-eighth of a penny. In other words, you are thus served at about one-third, if not under, the cost ruled by Covent Garden.

The same sort of thing would be equally possible in British cities—even in this great London—if the land round about belonged to the tillers of the soil, and if the “tolls” above mentioned could be regulated by legislation. Never forget that those peasants are freeholders, their little farms being family estates as much as any duke's lands in Britain.

They love the land, they love working on the land, improving it and living by it. Nor is it a question of small farms only, I know of “peasants” in that happy Grand Duchy worth their million of marks, owning

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spreading fields, and vineyards, and forest lands. Their wines—the famous *Affentaler* and *Markgräfler*, to name two only—are world-renowned. Their forest trees float down the Rhine in gigantic rafts as far as Holland for shipbuilding. Yes, it is a prosperous country. It strikes one, too, as a highly populated country, for wherever you look you see the people as busy as bees, yet all the Grand Duchy's inhabitants (now about two millions), could easily be swallowed up by London. I have called it a garden, but it contains the well-timbered mountain range of the Black Forest. It is a happy country and I think it would pay a British cabinet minister, say of the Board of Agriculture, to spend a summer there, looking well into all economic conditions; looking into local protective measures, too, for fostering local resources. In that country, though its national Exchequer may seem but small to British eyes, you do not hear much of any unemployed, nor of any chronically submerged. Even poverty there is of the old-fashioned ideal type. The poorest widow, if a country-woman, can keep a cow and feed it, there being patches of grass everywhere free to the poor. Any town poor are looked after on Elberfeld lines, the Grand Duchy having its Colony, too, for tramping out-of-works. At Carlsruhe there is now-a-days, moreover, a splendidly organised Labour Bureau of the sort above described. And municipalities are as wide-awake and progressive at Carlsruhe, Mannheim, and the two or three other cities, indeed quite as successful, as you might desire yours to be in Britain. Go, and judge for yourself, Sir, and you will not need your correspondent's accounts — favourably coloured though they seem, because nothing short of this would be accurate.



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It is a flourishing country otherwise: its schools, its universities and technical colleges are visited by students from all the world, its *Kunstschule* (fine arts—painting and sculpture) being a world-renowned home of the Muses. It is, in short, a highly differentiated, highly cultivated, highly successful little country, having its own grand-ducal “Home Rule,” though otherwise, since 1871, incorporated with modern Germany as a federal state of the empire. As for its geographical neighbour, the Kingdom of Württemberg—but a small kingdom as measured by Great Britain—it is not behind the Grand Duchy; yet its agriculture a hundred years ago was in nearly as bad a plight as that of Britain now. The Government of that kingdom, however, broke with antiquated conditions, legislating with a view to general progress, fostering the soil-tiller after the manner above shown; fostering industries also with the result that the country has risen by leaps and bounds, and quite recently a high government official has publicly stated: “*There is now not a pauper in our land.*” Note that this is the direct result of a Government setting itself to gain that result! It was not so, so late even as the middle of last century; it is so now, and it is the reward of a painstaking Government, working for the good of the country and not for its own love of office. May one not ask the question, If such testimony is possible of a second or even third-rank kingdom abroad, should Britain allow herself to be found less successful?

Indeed, however pretty the picture I have sketched above, it is not a unique, exceptional specimen of German conditions. You would find, more or less, the same all over Germany, the foundation of



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prosperity everywhere being an industrious peasantry, except indeed in East Prussia, where British (feudal) landlord conditions are found, much to the detriment of country and people, exactly as is the case here. Germany, happily, gradually broke with feudal institutions, improvement following upon improvement. Thus agriculture could thrive, fostered by wise Governments who protected the small soil-tiller, while generously assisting the larger cultivator. Germany, indeed, is not unusually favoured by natural conditions, but Germany has—what Britain has not—a contented race on their own land, working that land in the sweat of their brow, for their own reward and not for any landlord's enrichment. The "unearned increment" is a British phrase, and—taking the cream off the land in the shape of rent—a British antediluvian institution. Other countries, Germany included, had such benighted conditions in what are known as the "dark ages," but in Britain they have survived, and the whole social trouble here practically springs from the fact that modern England is in mediæval bonds! Germany has broken these feudal bonds. A German peasant therefore raises horses and cattle and sells them, he tills fields, plants kitchen gardens, tends orchards and vineyards—adding year by year to his substance. He works hard, being up with the lark, and his womenkind do not aspire to a piano, nor yet to the dress-fashions of city dames. They, too, are up with the lark, milk the cows, make butter, and are off to the nearest market with whatever requires to be sold.

There is, naturally, no "physical deterioration" in such a country, Governments everywhere doing their part towards preserving the health and strength of

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the nation. They may do so for their own ends—for army purposes, for instance—but it is done. In Germany still quite half the population is a country-bred and country-abiding race, whereas in Britain four-fifths of the people live in towns.

It is clear that Governments in Germany have good material to work upon. They know it and do their best to improve it. Thus agriculture is not only a home-bred occupation, it is a wisely improved one. There are some hundreds of agricultural colleges subsidised by the State; there are public lecturers spreading the discoveries of science among the people. There are some scores of test-stations where new machinery, new manures, etc., are tried, and whence the results are disseminated among the soil-tilling masses. Even the village schoolmaster often is an expert in agricultural matters, to whom the peasantry will refer in any difficulty.

I speak from personal knowledge. My own grandfather was one of Germany's educational reformers, who for forty years trained every schoolmaster in that blessed little Grand Duchy. I know he made a point of promoting husbandry among his students. I have looked into many a schoolmaster's village home and almost invariably found them bent on gardening and farming, both as a recreation and as an additional source of income. Above all, they instil wholesome notions into the minds of the country lads and lasses, by example, wedding them to the soil as it were, teaching them the beauty of country life, and showing them that land is the source of all wealth, but that this wealth can only be had for honest toil. Yes, the village schoolmaster, like the pastor, still is a social power in German lands.

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I am unconsciously drifting back to education. If only this country, instead of battling over the ascendancy of Anglicanism or Nonconformity, would learn that "educating" means fitting the young for the life they are born to, England, Sir, would be another country in a generation !

Not only do German Governments foster agricultural knowledge, they assiduously foster co-operation. There are great dairying concerns (like those of Denmark, one hears so often quoted here), made up of individual peasants, and there are associations for acquiring expensive machinery, let out to the individual agriculturist at moderate charges. There are co-operative stations for improving the breed of horses and cattle. There are co-operative banking associations, lending money to small owners at low rates—Governments stringently opposing destructive money-lending by their wise usury laws. The most famous of these national loan associations is a certain Co-operative Bank in Berlin, started by the State with a capital of fifty million marks, doing huge beneficent work among the peasantry throughout the country. Here agricultural co-operation is talked about in newspapers; in Germany it is a vast national undertaking and a brilliant fact, for in Germany the State is for ever considering the people—*das Volk*—well-knowing that a thriving peasantry is the best foundation on which national greatness can build securely.

Thus it comes to pass that while in Britain there is a constant cry for farm hands, there are in Germany, according to the latest returns, still some five million plain farm labourers. But, then, these are not the poverty-stricken hinds who, in Britain, naturally

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enough, if they have the chance, migrate to London even if they perish there. They are the sons and daughters of the freehold small peasants who take service on the larger farms, first, to earn a wage—saving up a little provision, too, towards their future; second, to improve their farming knowledge, for their aspiration in the main is to return to their native village to become owners in turn, either by inheritance or by marriage—not by any means an impossible ideal.

To come to practical results, though Germany has neither the wealth nor certain other advantages of Britain, she has, nevertheless, a soil infinitely improved by industry. Her area under cereals, potatoes, beetroot, etc., is six times as great proportionately as that of Britain. Here vast lands—one-third of the arable area—lie idle, because their owners, great landlords, cannot till them, and will not give them up to those who could. And this is the root-evil in Britain.

Small ownership in Germany is lucrative just because it is ownership. Properties, say, of five to two hundred acres are *the* source of the nation's agricultural wealth. It is the same in France, it being well known that the great war indemnity of 1870 could be paid off within a year just because France, like Germany, has a thriving peasant population. For any further description of German village life and its counterpart here, I beg to refer to the chapter "Homelessness" in *Britain's Next Campaign*.

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Now what is to be done in Britain? The colonising of England is the cry of the day. But you cannot



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take your slum-dwellers, your unemployed, "back to the land" though it is true enough that, originally, they have been driven from it! Britain has wantonly ruined her people and unless she would hopelessly ruin her deserted lands she cannot colonise with these helpless "masses"!

Educate! educate! This is the one remedy.

While penning this very page, taking up the daily paper I find this statement made in court—two paupers, aged eighteen and twenty, being prosecuted for insubordination and damage: "*At present there are three hundred and sixty-eight able-bodied young men in Marylebone Workhouse.*" The italics are mine. The prisoners had refused to work. The magistrate censured them for their *ingratitude to the ratepayers* (*sic*) and sentenced them to two months' hard labour.

One scarcely can take up one's morning paper without coming upon statements of this sort, arraigning Britain before the judgment of humanity. "Gratitude to the ratepayers," indeed!

Sir, these three hundred and sixty-eight hale young men have no business in a workhouse, however they got there. Here is your opportunity. Take these youths, and all others like them, from any workhouse, and from every street corner where they stand "unemployed," and train them! train them! How should they love work, having never had their true chance? Workhouse work is not fit for any Briton, for it lacks that which alone can make a man love his work. For one thing it lacks that liberty which—if I understand you aright—you are upholding in your objection to Colonies. But its chief lack is that it offers no future, it is work for work's sake like oakum-picking.

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But take these youths and train them. Show them there is a future on British soil for every man willing to earn it; that even for the navvies she may require for canal-building there is a home, a home of their own, somewhere on the canal shore, and that it shall be theirs the moment they are fit for it. Sir, you will be surprised how amenable these youths will become! How anxious to be taught—at least the great majority of them! It has always been one of my axioms—"train up a child, indeed, in the way it should go," and "spare not the rod"—only that "rod," as a rule, is for the back of him who has the upbringing! It is much more the parent's fault than the child's if there is unruliness in the young; much more the teacher's than the pupil's if the latter goes wrong. I knew a mother who brought up a family of exemplary sons, these standing splendidly through years of unusual trial; and she told me she taught them the sweet lesson of surrender during the first three days of their little lives—after that, she said, there never was any trouble. Even a tiny baby, she declared, knows when it gets its own way, and you are really wronging it when you think you are comforting it. Do what is right by your child, it will acquire the right habit from the first moment, and will develop along these lines. Certainly, seeing a child whipped has always made me feel I want to whip the whipper, and as for these imprisoned youths, if the magistrate could have sentenced their mother, England, it would have been more to the point, and one might, possibly, hope for a mending of her ways.

The youths of this nation are terribly ill-trained, almost in all classes, and cruelly ill-taught. If a man here fills his place in life, it is by sheer

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native quality, rarely because of the sort of training he has had.

The saying is well known that it was the German schoolmaster, much more than the drill-sergeant, who won the Franco-German war—that is, the man who had the training of the nation's youths long before they entered the army. That army is famed for its discipline, its million units forming an efficient whole, dependable like a well-constructed machine, and capable of realising a great strategist's long matured plans.

It is this same German education, with its thoroughness, its power of application, its patient investigation, its surrender of will, yielding up any enjoyment of the moment to great future aims—it is this which has overtaken Britain in almost every field of industry.

I can speak from personal knowledge of one of these industries which is deflecting millions of pounds from poor half-taught Britain. A relation of mine, of the prior generation, was the man who invented the modern preparation of quinine. He had a great factory and for years the sole "secret" of his invention. He, of course, made a vast fortune. The son of a clergyman, he began life as an apothecary's apprentice, which sounds funny here, but a German apothecary is not the druggist of British fame to whom one goes for a tooth-brush or a chance box of pills. He is not even your "cash chemist" who dabbles in Christmas presents and lending libraries; but is a graduate in chemistry, a college man, of all but equal standing with your family doctor. It is from the German apothecary's laboratory that other inventions besides quinine have issued, for it has yielded a practical application of science, in which

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Liebig was a pioneer, while in his footsteps have followed those chemical experts whose discoveries have expanded German agriculture and laid the foundation for industries costing Britain so heavy a loss. It was German scientific chemistry, for instance, which achieved beet-root sugar worth to Germany now some twenty millions of pounds annually; and again it was German chemistry which succeeded in the making of aniline dyes (of British coal tar, if you please) killing the British—*i.e.*, Indian—indigo trade, just as your cane sugar has been ousted. The original invention, indeed, was made in Britain, but Britain had no trained chemists to exploit it. Germany had these men, and in great numbers, so Germany has reaped the benefit! If this is adding “insult to injury,” Britain has herself to blame for not providing adequate training!

That old relation of mine had a hand in the starting of one of the greatest chemical concerns, bringing Mannheim on the Rhine in the Grand Duchy of Baden, originally as quiescent a place as old Carlsruhe, into world-fame for its chemical manures, its chemical dyes. These factories employ their thousands of operatives, their hundreds of trained chemists whose power of invention is not likely to dry up for a while yet.

See how these things tell on the economic advancement of a nation, on the well-being of her workers. Four-fifths of the dyes used in the world are now made in Germany. About 170,000 workers are employed, and, being prosperous, the industry can afford good wages—an average of ten millions sterling per annum, strikes being almost unknown. Beet-root sugar yields work in the factories to about 100,000, occupying nearly



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as many in growing the roots ; some £15,000,000 are thus disbursed to the workers. Even the refuse of the roots, by further chemical exploit, is turned into dried fodder worth a couple of millions annually. See what knowledge does, and how by sheer brain work it will create the very things in the natural possession of which Britain thought herself secure ; and not only produce them, but supplant the natural product. What is the use of crying for Protection—shutting the stable door when the horse is stolen ! For other successful industries could be named, and these German chemists will continue to supplant you, until you meet them with men of equal attainment. It is the “schoolmaster” that has done it !

The German Governments know well what they owe to these chemical experts, and therefore foster the science with munificent grants, the nation reaping from such sowing a hundredfold. Indeed, ever since Liebig published his “Organic Chemistry applied to Agriculture and Physiology” the German Governments have subsidised chemical laboratories throughout the country, in all branches, but especially for agricultural purposes, never losing sight of the fact that the soil is the chief natural source of the nation’s economic progress.

Chemistry is almost a hobby just now in Germany. When I re-visit the haunts of my youth I find scores of young men, distant relatives and others, all keen on “Chemie,” as the academical pursuit is called, even if they do not all go in for practical chemistry. This is simply because the nation has learned that knowledge of any sort is never amiss, and that the veriest ploughman is the better for understanding something of the mysteries concerning the elements

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of nature. Why, Nature herself is a great chemist; it is only following in her footsteps!

This much for the German "schoolmaster"—he has not only won a great war, he is a brave leader in the realms of science, and his pupils in battalions man the industries that so beset this great British Empire.

But Britons are not weaklings born. It is only that, in the mass certainly, they do not get their true chance, Government not fostering such training.

Forgive, Sir, this plain speaking. One would have Britain see her opportunity, her way out of the slough of her despair.

At the moment I am revising this for press it is unkind to say much concerning the defunct Education Bill, which has caused so much heart-burning, so much strife. Certain prophets already talk of another general election. Surely a wiser course were this: Let all in the present Parliament who have the nation's betterment really at heart stand shoulder to shoulder, sinking their differences of creed and opinion in a united effort to work out a comprehensive national scheme, which shall provide education indeed, and wipe out the disgrace that Britain is so grievously behind other countries as regards the efficiency of her people. Education means training for fitness; it is a vastly important matter, and should not be mixed up with any side issues, however dear these may be, and justly dear, to varying religious temperaments. Schools should no more be ruled by the clergy of any denomination than the administration of the law is, though both law and schools should bear evidence that they are national institutions of a Christian land. Therefore, instead of talking of dissolution, the legislative powers had better direct their full strength

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towards a broadly-planned training scheme, the one object of which shall be to fit English boys and girls for the battle of life. It has been amply shown that at present very few of them are on the way of being thus made fit. Rightly framed such a scheme would have to follow up, or rather lead the way to a following up of pretty nearly all the suggestions thrown out in these pages. As for the immediate guides of such an undertaking, no Education Board can be of any real use which is in constant danger of changing hands, and being controlled by party amateurs rather than by educational experts. Only the wisest and strongest of statesmen can steer the ship called State when the precious craft is so beset with difficulties as is Britain at this moment, and only a teaching genius of the first order should undertake to solve the British educational problem. National education means a great deal more than apparently has yet been apprehended here, and it will never be attained unless there are sound powers at its head, capable men, allowed to work patiently, uninterruptedly, moving clear-eyed and strong-handed towards the one recognised aim. Sir, whatever shortcomings may be found in this Letter, whatever flaws in its reasonings, your correspondent is right in her main contention that what this country needs above all things is the re-making of the people! But this is only another phrase for educating the nation. Never forget that knowledge, sound knowledge, rules the twentieth century world, and that ignorance, or even half-knowledge, is doomed to hopeless discomfiture.

It is no use to try and copy German methods, it would not be advisable even; for a nation, like an individual, must develop its own resources, its native



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gifts. But it is an unquestionable fact that if Britain would hold her own against Continental competition, she must qualify the British "schoolmaster" for a fair and square meeting with his German rival. *How, Sir?* this is the question for a wise Government to solve, and surely not beyond either their goodwill or their capability!

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Regarding the land question, its solution, of course, is part of the programme. British land-tenure is radically wrong, and British economic welfare will never be assured till the present soil-monopoly is broken. The land must belong to the man who tills it, not to his sweater!

Now, without dispossessing present landlords by main force, or even by forceful legislation, there is a very simple way of undoing past wrong. It was suggested the other day by Professor Alfred Russel Wallace in one of his many articles on the subject. It is this: Do not disturb any landlord in possession, nor yet his direct heir. If he has a son, let that son succeed—however ill-gotten the property was by his ancestors. But every year direct heirs are wanting; great landlords die and the estates pass to a more or less distant relative. Now and then, even, the House of Lords has to determine the succession between rival claimants. Sometimes quite an obscure, ever so distant, relation thus joins the so-called aristocracy. But such estates might very fitly be taken possession of in the name of the nation, to be "nationally" managed and become the cradle of a new Britain. On such lands your home colonies could be planted, and village communities of husbandmen founded. It



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will be the work of a generation, but happy the statesman who sets it going!

Lord Rosebery some fifteen months ago made a similar suggestion in certain election speeches in Cornwall, as reported by *The Scotsman*, pointing out that what are called "Crown lands" are really public lands, and that these—a considerable acreage—might form the foundation of a new soil-tilling, soil-owning, Britain.

These suggestions only show that even in landlord-ruled Britain it is quite possible to set out, by legitimate means, for radically reforming present land tenure. An immediate step would be to make the transfer, *i.e.*, sale, of land as easy as the changing of hands of any other commodity. Law must not continue a bulwark to the landed interest!

It is a terrible fact, and one underlying the whole social trouble here, that "half the land in England is in the possession of a hundred and fifty men; that half the land in Scotland is in the possession of not more than ten or twelve men." This is wronging Britain as a nation. I can only again here call attention to the chapter entitled "Homelessness" in *Britain's Next Campaign*.

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I have mentioned in the early pages of this discussion a certain pamphlet, entitled "Homelessness," which I wrote about a dozen years ago. Let me transcribe a few paragraphs, for Britons are not only an ill-trained, they are largely a homeless people!

"In no country is the love of home so strong as in England. 'Home, Sweet Home,' is the key to all that is noble and pure and beautiful in this nation.

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'Home' is the Englishman's castle; it is the cradle of his manhood, of all that is worth having in the race. And Englishmen know that. They are proud of their home-life, and rightly so, for there are no nobler homes on the face of the earth than the homes which yield the true Englishman, the true Englishwoman—a race not surpassed anywhere for sterling qualities. But England has kept her home blessings for the few; what has she done to make them possible for the million? There is not a more *homeless* race than the landlord-ridden people of England. Even the Red Indian has his wigwam, which is his *own*; but the cottage homes of England, for *own-ness*, are a myth, a fiction. True village life has long become impossible in England; the land belongs to the few, and the people, having none of it, unable therefore to make a living *on the land*, have drifted to the cities—for generations they have thus drifted—and the result is that vast individual homelessness we call by a collective name, 'unemployed, out-of-work' England. It is fast growing to be the national punishment for a national sin. The Parliaments of England ought long ago to have addressed themselves to right the wrongs of landless England, and they would have done so were the 'landed interest' not so strong a power even in the Commons of England. Thank God, the day is dawning which is going to mend this! Revolutions are slow in this country, for happily they are bloodless, but they are sure. The day is coming that will settle the land question.

"*The Homelessness of England!* Go about London and look into the starved faces of the unemployed. They are starving for the bread which perisheth, but there is a deeper starvation behind. Their *humanity* is

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crying out for a 'bread,' denied them for generations. What moral fibre do you expect, you home-loving Britons, of a man, a woman, coming of a stock which for generations never knew the meaning of 'Home'? What is a home, if not a place bound up with the traditions of family life? That little word *own* must be seen smiling from its threshold—it is but a little word, but *it makes a race*. They never knew it. They are born in a miserable tenement, crowded with wretched beings, surrounded with crime and filth—what moral fibre do you expect of them? Science has taught us the meaning of 'environment' as a race-producing factor—what, then, can we expect of the environment we have somehow allowed to be the seed-bed of the people?

"The other day I saw a man taken up for stealing a fowl from a poulterer's shop-front. It was a day or two before Christmas, when we all look for a good dinner; a raw, hungry day, too, and the poor fellow looked pinched enough. He was given in charge and marched to the station by a policeman. Of course he was; and rightly so, for society has to protect itself—that precious society which made him. Why, that man hasn't an idea that stealing is *wrong*; how should he, any more than a wild-cat? That man never knew what it is to grow up in a decent home; his mother, probably, never knew; his father, probably, was of the wild-cat type before him, with no thought but the prime law of nature, to pick up food somehow. Have *you* ever known the pangs of hunger? Have *you* ever been entirely homeless? Then go, and cast a stone at this man!

"They do not all steal; some only drink—what is to prevent them? Temperance work is very good,

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but it is only dealing with an effect. There is a cause behind—the miserable homelessness of the people. . . .”

Sir, if I could but burn into your heart, burn into the hearts of all who may read this Letter, a just perception of the *Homelessness* of Britain, the battle would be won. If the nation's rulers would but set this aim before them—true homes for the people—everything else would follow, for the “environment” would thus be created, from which a new race would spring. A fit British people would be the outcome, *i.e.*, a generation fit to be trained, fit to regain the ascendancy you once possessed and have lost. So great a national work, of course, demands heavy cost; sacrifice, too; but the ultimate measureless gain would be Britain's certain and great reward. It is well worth trying for!

\* \* \* \* \*

## THE SCHOOL DOCTOR

It is shown in the preceding pages how German Governments study the welfare of the people, how, in the words of the Imperial Minister for Home Affairs, they have “ensured the physical well-being of the workers,” and how, in the opinion of the same authority, the surprising industrial advance we have witnessed is largely due to the efficiency of the German working-man. It stands to reason that the highest efficiency cannot be expected unless the bodily health of man, woman and child is kept at the maximum pitch. Britons know this as regards the treatment of animals, a man's hunters and carriage-



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horses are carefully looked after, and even the labouring equine servant is prudently kept, for horseflesh costs money. But no one is greatly perturbed if the white slaves of England drop through sheer debility, for there are plenty of others to fill a vacant place. Apparently thus the nation judges, else one would not hear so much of physical deterioration, of underfed children, over-worked mothers, not to speak of men homeless by hundreds in London every night and, of course, foodless. No one seems to consider that this is labour lost and a detriment to national economic efficiency. No one seems to perceive that every desired whole is made up of multitudinous units, and that you cannot afford to be wasteful of your units. One cannot impress too strongly on the practical sense of this nation that a thorough-going policy of the people's welfare—though, of course, it is Christian; of course, it is humanitarian—is also simple, certain, profitable investment of national treasure. I suppose it is so by Divine planning. Men are but "dust," and poor creatures naturally, even the best of them. The Creator apparently would not get much of His sort of economy at their hands, unless He had so ordered this present-day dispensation that doing rightly, acting nobly, seeking the good of others, *will* always repay the doer in some personal, tangible advantage. When England shall have learned to act by the working classes as her rich men treat their studs, British industrial ascendancy once more will be assured. A gentleman's horses are far better housed, more intelligently fed, and more carefully worked, than are the wealth-producers of this nation.

Now, Germans are nothing if not thorough. They

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*will* go to the root of a thing, seeking to set things to rights there, well knowing that effects look after themselves, if you look after the causes. Therefore, not content with doing the utmost possible by the adult population, their foresight has invaded the realms of childhood. Some clear-headed medical authority publicly taught that while the crusade against consumption is right and meet, yet prevention would be better than cure; and he further called attention to the fact that hundreds of children in the incipient stages of tuberculosis attend school (not factories, if you please, in the capacity of "half-timers," as in Britain!) without either parent or teacher having the slightest suspicion that anything ails them. Indeed, many a poor child gets punished for indolence, or is, at least, blamed for backwardness, when really health is at fault. And even where lungs are sound, how often a scholar's eye-sight is defective, bringing him to poor credit as an acquirer of knowledge. Or see what an anæmic condition does; how it engenders lassitude, which is construed into laziness and chastised. One need but mention these things and readers will perceive it is so. But in Germany it has resulted in taking in hand the "incipient stages."

Readers of *Britain's Next Campaign* will remember a beautiful chapter entitled "How the City of Leipzig keeps its Baby Brother," and that it is an account of the delightful care taken in that city of poor little illegitimate babies, which here die by the thousand every year. I will invite readers once more to take to heart that special Leipzig city work—so beautiful, so Christ-like, but also so prudent as regards national efficiency. Now this Leipzig protection of helpless babyhood was set going by a medical man, that

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Doctor Taube who begged me to impress on English readers the advisability of putting in "the thin end of the wedge" if you want to solve the social problem. Leipzig is one of the model cities of Germany as regards enterprise for social betterment, if, indeed, one can say so in a country where all cities aspire to be models! But a British deputation—one sent by the British Government—might fitly visit Leipzig; they would find there valuable object lessons, both civic and humanitarian.

Bearing in mind that lovely care of babies at Leipzig, it seems but a natural development that the rise of what is called "School Hygiene" also can be traced to that city. This newest development is but of three or four years' standing, at least in its present complete form, and it is quite wonderful to observe how it has taken hold of the popular mind. From Leipzig the "School Doctor" has gone forth like a victor, taking possession of all cities in the twinkling of an eye. This is the more surprising since no coercion of any sort was used; it was merely shown how expedient it was to look well after the children's health, and every parent, every teacher, not to say all civic authorities, as with one accord responded. "School Doctors," armed with the nation's desire of extirpating preventible disease, number now some six hundred medical men, and are still being added to. Wiesbaden, so well-known as a British resort, took up the new gospel with much alacrity, becoming, next to Leipzig, a leader in school hygiene.

Throughout Germany medical oversight of scholars of the primary schools is part of the educational programme. It means that the children are professionally examined on reaching school age as to whether theirs



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is the physical condition from which educational results can be expected. Thus it would be determined at the outset whether any child is in need of special consideration, such as a preferential place in the class-room to suit defective hearing or eyesight, including the grant of spectacles; or whether exemption from certain instruction, like gymnastics, swimming, singing, etc., is desirable on the score of general health. The heart, lungs, spine and all other organs are carefully examined, and the results recorded in the School Health Book, which is kept "up to date" by yearly entries showing whether there is any physical improvement or the reverse. There are in these books three degrees of physical condition—"good," "middling," and "bad," and three degrees of mental calibre—"normal," "backward," and "defective." Twice a year the teacher enters the height and weight of each child, to which the doctor adds chest measurements. A thorough-going re-examination (at which parents may be present) of each scholar takes place in the third, fifth and eighth year of school attendance—the latter being the concluding year, when the object is to find out to what occupation a boy or girl shall be directed.\* How surpassingly sound this is! Is it likely children would be given over to half-timership, or even to health-taxing home-work, if such thorough medical oversight were accorded to British boys and girls? Under the defunct Education Bill a certain degree of such oversight was planned, and one has seen in the daily press accounts of medical deputations lodging their desires with the Board of Education; also certain cities appear to strive in the

\* See p. 73.



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same direction. A School Doctors Bill is now before Parliament. But it yet remains to be seen to what extent Britain will act as the guardian of the young. That Germany, before many years are over, will be able to furnish valuable figures, proving solid gain in national health, and therefore in efficiency, therefore in economic advance, needs no demonstrating.

Now here is a great public work done, and yet it does not burden the Exchequer to any alarming degree. With rare judgment the central Government did not coerce the nation, but appealed to its own instincts. Thus the "civic conscience" took up the matter, every town appointing its own school doctor, or doctors, according to its own best judgment. Some cities thus pay certain fixed stipends, others remunerating according to the work done. Progressive Mannheim, for instance, forthwith engaged its permanent school-doctor at a salary of £500 a year, requiring him to give his full time. Berlin has about two score of medical men on its list, paying them £100 each for their yearly share in the work.

In some of the towns regular conferences are now held between doctors, teachers and parents, the school authorities naturally rising to requirements—the healthful condition of class-rooms, including heating and lighting, good playgrounds, etc., being but natural adjuncts of the new hygienic policy. Also the "Forest School" may be mentioned here, an account of which has latterly reached Britain, *viz.*, the open-air teaching of sickly youngsters, weeded out from the city schools, as practised in a green-wood on the outskirts of Berlin. It is, of course, the result of Berlin modern "school hygiene," but nothing new after all! I have seen such "forest schools" elsewhere these

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years past—for instance, in the “Colony of Mercy”; they have a “forest church” there, an actual sylvan, summer duplicate of their beautiful Zion Church, and both the Sunday and often the week-day instruction of epileptics, religious and secular, is thus carried on in their historic beech-wood. The Berlin “forest school,” all the same, is a thing to be studied and followed, seeing that it provides actual “open-air treatment” along with the required educational curriculum.

The German medical profession, of course, is enthusiastic in these modern developments, but also parents everywhere have agreed with great good sense to this Government inspection of children. If any parents prefer to substitute the family doctor they are quite at liberty to do so, if certain technicalities are observed—for the inspection takes in all children of the national schools, not only those of the working classes. It is to be noted that the school doctors are only required to report on a child's health, watching it in order to report, but not otherwise to take a child under treatment, and a very wise provision this is. Parents, of course, are at once informed if their children are physically wanting, and this will generally secure the needful home attention, the school doctor giving his helpful suggestions, which often will suffice to turn a child's whole life from one of debility to one of vigour. Free dental attendance of the scholars is being mooted, and, no doubt, before long will come to pass, seeing how important sound teeth are to health. In some towns specialists even are consulted by the school authorities in certain cases. Also, it should be added, the tendency everywhere is to qualify the teachers on general health questions

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since they are in charge of their pupils day after day. Children of the poorer classes actually ill are referred to other agencies. But such thorough-going examination *before* any illness makes havoc not only saves multitudinous lives, it is otherwise worth millions to the nation. It saves, firstly, the exchequer of the National Insurance, which, as we have seen, has to provide for all sick workers, these in most cases being the result of neglected childhood; it enhances, secondly, the fitness of the workers; and, thirdly, since there is such a thing as *mens sana in corpore sano*, it will yield not only physical but mental gain with consequent moral development.

I may with advantage point here to an outcome of the Elberfeld system, which also makes for national health. It is not mentioned in my book, being a recent addition to the many beneficial provisions under that system, showing that it is nowise cut and dried, but a living growth. At Elberfeld there is now as much as three shillings a week milk money available for every infant under one year needing the city's succour. It only requires the doctor's order. It is full-cream milk from a special dairy, and the mother need not even go for it, if unable to do so; it is taken to her house in a sealed flagon, and not only so, but she receives printed instructions as to the exact quantities an infant should receive, *i.e.*, to what extent the milk is to be diluted with water during the first month, the second month, and so forth to the sixth, when it should be fed on pure milk. How this makes one long that every British slum baby were equally cared for. But, ah me! here one would mostly need to send a constable along with the sealed flagon, the city's gift, to watch over its contents and make



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sure the infant really gets it, lest its parents sell it for drink or otherwise rob the baby of it! But what can you expect of your untrained, ill-cared-for masses? It is a sheer marvel if there are good parents among them. It makes one's heart burn to hear of these magnificent provisions, this watching over the welfare of old and young in the Fatherland, comparing therewith the frightful infant mortality and wholesale adult starvation in Britain. There are scores of deaths registered every year in London alone under the heading "Found starved," or "Accelerated by insufficient food." But who registers the many half-starved lives, the ill- and under-fed children, all contributing to that same appalling total of national physical deterioration? Talk of drink! Of course, they drink, for physical deterioration means moral deterioration! If Britain saw to the feeding of the people, watched over their health in the manner above shown, three-fourths of the drunkenness would disappear.

But I was speaking of school hygiene. When I look back to my own school-days in old Carlsruhe, and remember how we girls, some thirty or forty, were cooped up in a class-room scarcely larger than a dining-room of fair dimensions—remembering, further, how a teacher would even sleep in one of the class-rooms, evidently quite innocent of any perception that this could not improve ventilation during a winter's day—I note the stupendous advance made since, and that modern Germany is indeed a model State now, bearing examination at every point. Hearts? lungs? who ever troubled in my young days whether children had any, and in what condition? It is not so now, and a Germany re-born is the outcome. This is not saying that Germany is a Utopia, but only that



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she is in a fair way of attaining good economic times for all concerned, and most of all for those by whose toil a nation prospers. Might one live to record the same steady improvement of this country!

\* \* \* \* \*

I feel I owe an apology—not only to my British friends for so persistently holding up to them my whilom Fatherland, but also to my German kindred for thus pleading with the country of my adoption not to let itself be eclipsed by a Continental rival. But I am peculiarly situated. I am neither fish nor flesh. Though a British-born subject, I am yet an interloper here. Though of German parentage, I have long lost all rights of German citizenship, thus being but a sojourner and pilgrim in both countries. A sad confession, but it has its redeeming counterpart. I have thus attained to the broader level of humanity, to the perception that a narrow “love” of one’s country, so far from being true patriotism, is as deplorable almost as self-love. All countries are God’s countries, and all should serve one another, learn from each other, for no nation is the exclusive recipient of His bounties, any more than an individual is. Further, my cosmopolitan existence gives me a vision I should certainly not have gained were I to look at things through one-sided spectacles. I have long learned to read Britain by German light, and to look at Germany with British experience. This I consider a great set-off to what otherwise is denied me. It has resulted, for one thing, in the books I have addressed to hospitable Britain, seeking to repay her for a life spent here—a life made up of

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hardships and blessings, as human lives mostly are—by assisting her towards a further stage in her growth.

I in no wise disparage Britain when I am showing up her terrible backwardness in certain directions. No one would write the books I have written if one did not believe in the fine qualities of this nation, the sterling soundness of the British character at its core. Indeed, I should not venture to write such books in Germany, and this is fine testimony as regards Britain !

So let Britain arise—confess her sin, her greed, her folly—for is she not feeding her pride, her false notions of greatness, on the life-blood of her own people? Let her strive to make amends, and all may be well. Britain is worth saving, and it will be a great day when one can write of her national redemption.

\* \* \* \* \*

I set out inditing a letter, and lo, it has grown into a book ! But after all, there is no law of the Medes and Persians as to the length of letters. I have ventured to address this open missive to you, Sir, because the Local Government Board is directly concerned in the main contention of these pages. But, truly, this letter concerns a British Government as a whole, however constituted. I offer its suggestions humbly and trustfully to the present “powers that be.”

As to the nation—Britain herself—I would address one more warning to her conscience, one more pleading, still believing in her heart of hearts, if only her eyes can be opened that she may *see* !

\* \* \* \* \*

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## CONCLUSION—A MESSAGE AND ITS MEANING

Some dozen years ago there appeared a book entitled "Dreams." Being by a well-known author, it will have been eagerly read by thousands, but I doubt if the arresting meaning of one of these dreams came home to many readers! If it had struck consciences, entered hearts, as it should have done through the gateway of perception, action *must* have followed and the present pages need not have been written. I know I read that book, that particular dream, when first it was published, and I did *not* see in it, learn from it, what on re-reading it recently stood revealed to me. Fifteen years ago I had not the experience, the knowledge of Britain's social plight, I have now. And thus, judging others by myself, I would excuse the multitude of readers: they do not know! do not understand! And yet surely it should be shown them, not only how great is Britain's need, but how great her danger!

So I have thought of transcribing here a few portions of that remarkable dream (with apologies to Olive Schreiner—of whose many fine writings this surely is the finest), expounding the same, with apologies to all whom these comments may concern.

Says the dreamer :—

"I dreamt God took my soul to hell. Hell was a fair place. I said to God, 'I like this place.' . . . And we came where hell opened into a plain. A great house stood there. Marble pillars upheld the roof and white marble steps led up to it. The wind of heaven blew through

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it. Only at the back hung a thick curtain. Men and women there feasted at long tables. . . . What they feasted with was wine ; they drew it from large jars which stood somewhat in the background, and I saw the wine sparkle as they drew it."

Present writer's notes to the reader:—

*" Hell " for our purpose is Christian—some call it Heathen—England. The men and women feasting are those large portions of the community who live by the sorrows of the poor. More or less we, the so-called favoured classes, all thus live, even if it cannot be said of us that we are actually concerned in "grinding the faces of the poor." Individually we scarcely can help participating in the wrong committed by us collectively. I may not be a sweater myself, but I scarcely can buy any article without profiting by the tears, the life-blood, wrung from the workers.*

"And I said to God, 'I should like to go and drink.'"

*I should like to partake of the wealth.*

"And God said, 'Wait.' And I saw men coming into the banquet house ; they came in from the back and lifted the corner of the curtain at the sides and crept in quickly ; and they let the curtain fall behind them ; they bore great jars they could hardly carry. And the men and women crowded round them, and the newcomers opened their jars and



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gave them of the wine to drink ; and I saw that the women drank even more greedily than the men. And when others had well drunken they (the newcomers) set the jars among the old ones beside the wall, and took their places at the table. And I saw that some of the jars were very mildewed and dusty, but others still had drops of new must on them and shone from the furnace."

*The newcomers—the nouveaux riches. They enter the pleasure house from the back, having risen from the furnace of toil where the workers welter and swelter. They lift the curtain which divides the classes from the masses, creeping in quickly and dropping it more quickly behind them. They do not like to remember their origin, and would have it forgotten by the feasters whom they now join. They bring with them great jars of wine—great bags of wealth—and spend it freely. And women drink more greedily even than men. When it comes to the spending of wealth, women are apt to out-do the men in love of luxury. And when all have drunken the newcomers set their jars among the old ones beside the wall and take their places at the table. The old jars are mildewed and dusty—the old aristocracy—the new jars still bearing traces of the furnace where they were made. You may tie a gorgeous ribbon to your new jar ; but though the*

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*moneymaker becomes a "lord," he rarely rises above his origin.*

"And I said to God, 'What is that?'  
For amid the sound of singing, and over  
the laughing, across the wine-cups I  
heard a cry.

"And God said, 'Stand a way off.'  
And He took me where I saw both sides  
of the curtain."

*Some of us "see both sides." Thus  
certain books get written, thus preachers  
of righteousness arise crying, "Repent ye,  
while yet it is time."*

"Behind the house was the wine-press  
where the wine was made."

*The working dens where all wealth is  
made.*

"I saw the grapes crushed."

*Sweated—worked hard for insufficient  
pay.*

"And I heard them cry. I said, 'Do  
they on the other side not hear it?' God  
said, 'The curtain is thick, and they are  
feasting.'"

*Many things make up that thick curtain ;  
for one thing it is habit. We are so used  
to conditions—even to deplorable con-  
ditions—that we really believe God made  
the poor ; that it is His dividing line  
separating the classes from the masses.  
Quite readily we take it that one half of  
mankind is born to cruel hardships so  
that the other half may live leisurely by  
their toil.*

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*Modes of thought are ruling our judgment almost against our will, so do all manner of institutions which form the mould of our life; the very churches meaning one thing to the rich and another to the poor. It is in Britain only, so far as my knowledge goes, that we have pews for those who can pay and some few free benches for the poor at the back of what we call "the House of God."*

"And I said, 'But the men who came in last. They saw?'

"God said, 'They let the curtain fall behind them—and they forget!'"

*One would think that those who themselves have come out of the wine-press would surely spend their lives in breaking the chains of their poor brothers and sisters. The dreamer is told "they forget." They have a way of becoming great men in the churches, being spoken of as "such good men." One could name such a one (indeed more than one), a shining light, a good man truly; but he has forgotten how it felt when he was in the wine-press!*

*The dreamer went on watching the feast, and God, too, stands watching.*

*The feasters, indeed, are "religious," some of them; they say their "grace," they "say prayers."*

"For this fair banqueting house we thank Thee, Lord. . . .

"For us Thou hast made it. . . .

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“‘Oh, fill our jars with wine, dear  
Lord. . . .’

“‘Give peace and plenty in our  
time. . . .’”

*Asks the dreamer at this strange litany,  
these echoes of our family prayers :*

“‘Whom is it they are talking to?’  
Says God, ‘Do I know whom they speak  
of?’ The feasters are looking up at the  
roof——”

*Their prayers are rising to the roof of  
the churches, to the ceilings of many a  
“Christian” dining-room ; but out in the  
sunshine God is watching.*

“‘Our children’s children, Lord, shall  
call Thee blessed.

“‘Our children’s children——’

“‘I said to God, ‘The grapes are  
crying!’

“‘God said, ‘Still! I hear them!’”

*“And their cry came up unto God.”*

Ex. ii. 23.

“‘Our children’s children shall call  
Thee blessed.

“‘Pour forth more wine upon us, Lord.

“‘More wine——

“‘Wine!

“‘Wine!!

“‘Wine!!! dear Lord!’”

*Well may the dreamer be awestruck at  
the strange mixture of religiousness and  
greed traceable in our very prayers, and as  
she looks on she sees the curtain moving—  
ever so slightly!*



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“‘Is it a wind?’ she asks.

“‘A wind,’ says God.”

*What is that slight commotion causing the curtain to quiver? Even the feasters perceive it and get alarmed. They must do something to keep quiet the men and women who are evidently moving on the other side of the curtain, threatening to break through! So—*

“Some of the feasters rose and gathered the most worn-out cups and into them they put what was left at the bottom of other vessels. Mothers whispered to their children, ‘Do not drink all; save a little drop when you have drunk.’”

*Gentle mothers, how they will teach their luxury-bred offspring to give something to the poor little children!*

“And when they had collected all the dregs they slipped the cups out under the bottom of the curtain without lifting it. After a while the curtain left off moving.”

*Was there ever such a scathing description of what we call charity?*

“And being a good economist and charitable besides, she took all the bones and cold potatoes, and broken pie-crusts, and candle-ends (when she had quite done with them), and made them into excellent soup for the deserving poor.”

(‘Bab Ballads.’)

*Thus the worn-out cups, the dregs of our feasting (the things we no longer*

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*want) are slipped under the curtain and—*

“After a while it left off moving.

“I said to God, ‘How is it so quiet?’

“He said, ‘They have gone away to drink it.’

“I said, ‘*They drink it—their own!*’

“God said, ‘It comes from this side of the curtain, and they are very thirsty.’”

*All wealth being the produce of labour, when we are charitable to the poor, collecting even vast sums every winter on “hearing the grapes crying,” we are really but returning them their own—some drops of that wine, the red life blood, which by the alchemy of labour becomes that wealth for the sake of which they are crushed! They do not know it, they drink it eagerly, and the world once more seems at peace.*

*But as the feast goes on—*

“After a while I saw a small white hand slipped in below the curtain’s edge along the floor”—

*slipped in from the wine-press into the banqueting house*

“—and it motioned towards the wine jars.

“And I said to God, ‘Why is that hand so bloodless?’

“God said, ‘It is a wine-pressed hand.’”

*The feasters, some of them, see it; no wonder they start. They have heard of revolutions, of trodden-down peoples rising against their oppressors. Britain at this*

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*moment has the example of Russia before her. The feasters tremble for their wine-jars. These are "ours!" they cry: "our own! our property!"*

"I said to God, 'Why are they frightened of that one small hand?'

"God answered, 'Because it is so white.'"

*The wine-pressed hand of revolutions, so poor, so white—how terribly it avenged the people's wrongs a hundred years ago in France! Do we think the "wine-pressed hand" in this favoured island quite incapable, or, at least, not likely to creep in some day "below the curtain's edge, motioning toward the wine-jars"? Every winter processions of hollow-eyed hungry men and women may be seen invading the respectable portions of London—jewellers' shops and other wealth depôts hastily close their shutters. What is this but that "small white hand"—so white because it is a wine-crushed hand?*

*Well may the feasters tremble. They rise, taking—*

"Small stones, putting them under the edge of the curtain to keep it down."

*What are these "small stones" but our inadequate efforts to do something for the unemployed, the submerged? The British Government thus far has devised nothing but "small stones."*

"And I said to God, 'Will these stones keep the curtain down?'

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"God said, 'What think you?'

"I said, 'If the wind blew——'

"God said, 'If the wind blew!'

"And the feast goes on."

"And suddenly I cried to God, 'If one should rise among them, even of themselves, and start up from the table and should cast away his cup and cry, "My brothers, my sisters, stay! What is it that we drink?" and with his sword should cut in two the curtain, and holding wide the fragments cry, "Brothers, sisters, see! it is not wine! not wine! My brothers, oh, my sisters——!" And he should overturn the——'

"God said, 'Be still! See there!'"

—showing to the dreamer—

"The graves of those who rose up at the feast and cried."

*Throughout history there have been some—a few—who rose at the feast, crying: a Socrates, a John the Baptist, a Savonarola, a Mazzini, a Carlyle, a Ruskin, a Tolstoi—aye, Christ Himself!*

*They have generally been "flung out of the banqueting house." Yet their graves are tended by posterity, adorned "with flowers and gilded marble." How comes it? asks the dreamer.*

"God said, 'Because their bones cried out, they covered them!'"

*Said Jesus of Nazareth, "Hypocrites, ye build the tombs of the prophets!"*

\* \* \* \* \*



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*God takes the dreamer away from  
present-day England and shows her the  
history of nations.*

“After I had travelled for a while I came where on seven hills lay the ruins of a mighty banqueting house, larger and stronger than the one I had seen standing.

“I said to God, ‘What did the men who built it here?’

“God said, ‘They feasted.’

“‘On what?’

“‘On wine.’”

*The dreamer sees the ruins of the  
Colosseum—*

“‘How came it that this large house fell?’

“‘Because the earth was sodden—’

*sodden not only with martyrs’ blood, but  
with the blood of myriads of slaves who  
raised the splendid piles of Rome.*

*Her vision takes her further to where the  
ground is strewn with “marble blossoms.”*

“‘What was here once?’

“‘A pleasure-house.’

“Ay, ’twas a fairy house. There has not been one like it nor ever shall be. The pillars and the porticoes blossomed,

*(Grecian art)*

and the wine-cups were as gathered flowers; on this side all the curtain was brodered with fair designs, and the stitching was of gold.

“‘How came it that it fell?’

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“ ‘On the side of the wine-press,’ said God, ‘it was dark ! ’ ”

\* \* \* \* \*

*Yet another fallen civilisation.*

“ We came where lay a mighty ridge of sand and a dark river ran there ; and there were two vast mounds.

“ ‘ They are very mighty.’ ”

“ ‘ Ay, exceeding great.’ ”

*“ They made their lives bitter with hard bondage in mortar and in brick . . . The afflicted children of Israel built for Pharaoh treasure cities.”* Ex. i. 11—14.

*They built those mounds, too, the pyramids.*

“ And I listened. God asked me what I was listening to. And I said, ‘ a sound of weeping. I hear the sound of strokes . . . ’ ”

“ God said ‘ It is the echo of the wine-press lingering still among the coping-stones upon the mounds. A banqueting-house stood here ! ’ ”

*God calls the dreamer away from this vision by the Nile, showing her*

“ a barren hill-side, where the soil was arid.

“ ‘ There was a feasting-house here once upon a time.’ ”

“ ‘ I see no mark of any ! ’ ”

“ ‘ There was not left one stone upon another that has not been thrown down.’ On the hill-side was a lonely grave.

“ I said to God, ‘ What lies there ? ’ ”

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“He said, ‘A wine-truss, bruised in the wine-press!’

“At the head of the grave stood a cross; on its foot lay a crown of thorns. . . .”

\* \* \* \* \*

*Yet another picture.*

“A wide plain . . . great stones lie shattered, half covered with the desert sand.

“‘There is writing on them, but I cannot read it.’

“God blew aside the sand and I read the writing:—

*“Weighed in the balance  
and found ——”*

*The last word was buried in sand.\**

\* \* \* \* \*

The British banqueting-house still stands. But even now Britain is weighed in the balance—weighed by the condition of her ill-cared-for masses—and she is found “wanting.”

Is it too late in the day for her to learn a lesson from past history? Shall she escape where mightier nations, one after another have fallen? These past civilisations all fell because “on the other side of the curtain it was dark.”

Some say the twentieth century will be the century of Socialism. What if a Christian people, whose eyes have been opened, strove to make it the century

\* Readers should look up Olive Schreiner’s book and read that dream in full; reading it very carefully, for it is pregnant with meaning. Quoting it thus in parts, interspersed with comments, has necessarily broken the dramatic presentation. But I shall have gained my end if readers will now turn to the full text with an open mind! It is a sermon to the world.

# Britain's Hope

of Brotherhood, pulling down with their own hands that terrible curtain and so arranging the laws of the land that rich and poor shall dwell together as children of one and the same Father? Is it not possible thus to legislate that the rich shall not be so very rich and the poor not so very poor? For there is enough and to spare on God's earth for all who walk thereon—walking it as pilgrims only, bound for another Land.

\* \* \* \* \*

## SUMMING UP

Allow me to take you back, Sir, to those two primary needs for bettering the working classes of this country—the prohibition of all child-labour (half-timers), and reclaiming the married woman from factory work, including factory home-work.

I cannot do better than give the Prime Minister's own words, quoting them back to him. Said Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman the other day, on receiving a deputation at Downing Street, as reported by the daily press: "The evil of child mortality was appalling. One hundred and twenty thousand babies dying annually—that being the figure last year, at all events, in England and Wales—was a fact that, after recognising it, *almost prevented Britain from looking the world in the face*. The standard of health in the community, they had reason to believe, went on improving, the general death-rate declining, and yet children died at this terrible rate. Such loss of life meant deterioration of the race. It seemed to him there were two things that they should try and do for children.



## Pressing Social Problems

They should see, in the first place, that they were well-born. He used these words in their natural sense: born in good condition, when their mother was fit for bearing, fit in her knowledge and training, and fit in the amount of leisure and attention she could give to the great business she had on hand. Surely this matter was one of the supreme tests of civilisation, and, if we got behind, it showed that we were not among the civilised nations so far as this subject was concerned. It was absolutely necessary for mothers to have good air, good water, good housing, ease, a certain amount of leisure, and all the other conditions that gave comfort and health. If we did *not give her these, we failed in our duty.*"

These are golden words—fit to stand as the final plea of this Open Letter. One is right, then, in urging the immediate release of married women from factory work. Yet how could the nation's leader speak these words and not forthwith strain every nerve to give them effect? An unsophisticated person like the present writer would have thought that a Bill would have straightway been laid on the table of the House that should give to British women—mothers—all the Prime Minister above declared they must have, if Britain would "look the world in the face"! Weeks have passed, even months—one is still looking for such a Bill. Are the Prime Minister's public utterances mere words? Surely not! Surely he stands pledged to these words in the most literal sense, and he cannot possibly fail!

I was right, then, in pointing out that we must go back to origins—the making of mothers; right in claiming that the British annual slaughter of innocents must cease—a hundred and twenty thousand of

## Britain's Hope

babies alone being sacrificed every year, not counting the appalling waste of life among child-breadwinners. This out-herods Herod; and if he, the heathen, stands arraigned before humanity, where shall Britain be—Christian England, as she loves to be called? I was right in naming these primary measures the two outposts which forthwith must be secured if the social victory is to be won!

But there is more; the Prime Minister not only asks for the release of motherhood, he very rightly demands the betterment of its entire environment. This includes everything asked for in this Letter! You cannot improve that environment by sweeping out a corner here and a corner there. You must make a clean sweep, plan a comprehensive campaign, as above is shown. The King's Ministers cannot plead ignorance. Sir Henry's words are quivering with knowledge, and they pledge him to the task.

Apart from the Prime Minister's own words, I am supported by what one reads in the daily papers. It is curious how, while writing the present pleadings, evidence crowds in on one day after day. Nor is such evidence mere coincidence; it is *always* to the fore, always accusing Britain before humanity and before Almighty God! On the very day when I am putting the finishing touches to these pleadings it is reported in the papers that the women chain-makers of Cradley Heath, of which there are about one thousand, are rising to the one remedy poor sweated slaves have in this country—they are forming a workers' union. These female toilers, at least many of them, work sixty hours a week, with the financial result of about four-and-sixpence—bread-winners at such a sinful rate, such a wasteful rate as regards their physique,

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which, as amply proved, means national deterioration. Some of them earn, with hard toil, their fourteen shillings, but hundreds stand at the anvil, early and late, and cannot make more than six shillings a week at best—four-and-sixpence being not an unusual thing at Cradley! One is told that those who profit by this shameful female labour, *i.e.*, the immediate employers, are men, some of them, of “Christian” reputation! It is terrible to have to point, however gently, to such a plague-spot in Christian England. The sorrows of the children of Israel of old, the echoes of whose “wine-press” linger amid the ruins of Egypt, whose “cry” went up unto God, bringing down His judgment upon Pharaoh and his land, were not more bitter than the “cry” of these women chain-workers, subjects (not slaves!) of King Edward VII., fellow-subjects with you and me! The modern “wine-press” is red with the life-blood of underpaid workers. The figures behind the curtain are beginning to move; they, at any rate, are seeking to be heard; their “cry” is filling the newspapers, God watching—“Still! *I* hear!” Shall such woman-labour continue to the enrichment of some few who, one fain believes, know not what they do, else they surely could not profit by such toil?

The daily paper from which I quote—innocently, at least incidentally—remarks that bad as the plight of these Cradley Heath women is, there are worse things to be found among the women brick-makers or among the female workers in galvanising shops. Think of a woman making bricks! It is not recorded that Pharaoh employed women in his Scripture-arraigned brick-making!

Truly the cry of toil-ground British womanhood

## Britain's Hope

is going up unto God, day after day! Sometimes, when British tourists return from Germany, they will flatter their British pride, declaring, "how much better things are in our own dear little island!" They have seen women working in the fields, doing hard work, and—manly Britishers as they are—they do not like the sight. Now it is true that peasant wives and daughters on the Continent often do work hard, doing field labour one would like to relegate to strong men. But, then, it is casual work, falling on them only now and then, say at harvest time or when some other pressure demands every available pair of hands. They do not spend their life on the fields, year in year out, sixty hours a week, like the Cradley Heath chain-slaves! And above all, what they do is for their own sole gain; they (*i.e.*, the families they represent) are owners of the field on which you see them toil; and this makes all the difference! They are not exploited by your Christian or un-Christian sweater! The Cradley Heath labour is slavery: it is forced labour because its wage, a miserable sweating wage mostly, is all that stands between these women and starvation.

It is reported of the Cradley women that they keep their homes neat, and as clean as they can be made by scrubbing, but that these homes "are not cottages fit to ask human beings to live in, and certainly not cottages for the use of which four shillings a week should be exacted!" Here is your slavery again: some landlord who owns the hovels, profiting by unrighteous conditions, takes four shillings a week out of the pittance earned by these women. It practically is so, though their wage be supplementary to the male breadwinner's insufficient earnings. One of these men slaves, having bravely done what



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he could for upwards of fifty years, said to a visitor : " You see, ma'am, there is another world a-coming, where we shall be dealt by more justly, for we never gets our fair due here ! " One remembers what Christ said concerning Lazarus and Dives ! And you, Sir, having experience of your own beyond anything the Prime Minister can know from personal acquaintance with manual labour, you do know that it is an unworthy exaction to let a woman earn any wage at an anvil, or by carrying iron bars to and fro and heavy bundles of chains laid on arms intended by Nature to cradle a baby ! And this ill-paid chain-making is not by any means the most cruel thing in the way of labour put on women in this country—altogether apart from what is called " sweating," which forms a chapter of ill-usage of its own ! Will not you, and, indeed, will not Government, spend every moment of your present term of office in solving this awful Woman-labour question, this crying Housing problem ! Regarding the latter, if hovels must be lived in until Britain provides fit homes—own homes—both rural and urban, the rent should be limited by legislation and not be forced up by the absence of sufficient housing room, or by the fictitious ground-values obtaining in this so-called " free " country !

Truly one cannot probe the British social problem in any direction, but one comes upon things which would move the pious indignation of British landlords themselves if they happened, say, in the Sultan's dominions, or on the Congo. England is always crying out when oppression is reported from abroad ; this is right and meet ; only she should see the beam in her own eye, and diligently set herself to pull it out.

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Not unduly to prolong this summing up—for one could write volumes on the sweating, the hard oppression, in the metropolis alone—what is wanted, as I have endeavoured to show in these pages, is not detail improvement, not a tinkering here, a stop-gap mending there; what is wanted is *generalship*, is *statesmanship*, going in for a campaign thorough enough, complete enough, to be commensurate with the evil which stares you in the face. I do not believe in part-measures, even if they are good; but I should believe in the present Government opening fire along the whole front, guided by the one supreme fact that the children of the nation, all British-born infants, have a right to conditions which shall at least be on a level with a horse-breeder's policy when he says, "I have an eye to stock!" Nothing else is wanted, for it will drive you to solving the Housing question, solving the Land question; it will mean abolishing female labour, wherever it clashes with "motherhood"; it will mean a minimum wage for the male bread-winners; it will mean making these said male bread-winners fit to deserve an adequate wage—thus it means Training Colonies to reclaim the unfit, and teach the young. It will, further, include a true Elberfeld system to look after the people, transforming the so-called upper classes bodily, which means individually, into their helpers, their friends, their stay, until better conditions obtain. It will include Insurance, contributive Insurance; for the nation's workers must not be treated as babies for whom everything is done without their co-operation. An "unearned increment" is hurtful wherever found.

I quite agree this is a large order, but not larger, Sir, than the evils which call it forth! And if it is a

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great undertaking—well, Britain prides herself on being a great nation, an Imperial country. Let her prove herself so! She could never shirk any duty merely because it is great, because it taxes all her powers, appealing to her honour! Everything, at least most things, are possible to him who makes up his mind, and where there is the will there always is a way. At any rate, Sir, one can take no denial, one cannot admit one is asking too much, until you and your fellow-Ministers have *proved the impossibility* by a whole-hearted attempt!

A final word to yourself. You were present when the Prime Minister spoke in Downing Street as above quoted. I take it you agreed with every word your chief uttered. Yet you had an opinion of your own thus stated: "If wives—mothers—would spend less on drink, and the husbands less on betting and gambling, it would be the better for the children, and for themselves." True, Sir; but here I have you again! What can you expect of these untaught masses, these untutored minds? It is their want of education on the one hand, that is, of character-training, it is their unbridled liberty on the other, which result in those evils you deplore. So do not tell me again, you "would rather a British loafer loafed to the end of his days, you would rather see him die on the street, a free man, than that he were reclaimed by the fettering of his will!" You are radically wrong here, though a capable judge and wise statesman otherwise, as is well known. But you will not only recognise your error like a man, you will so hedge in the loafer's liberty, his precious British inheritance, that he shall become fit to claim it. But this once more takes us back to the Training Colonies,

## Britain's Hope

the founding of which should stand out brightly in contemporary history as John Burns's great gift to his own people. When every working lad after school age once more shall be "apprenticed"—and this is what your colonies will represent!—when every young girl shall be so placed, so taught, that future motherhood shall have its fair chance, all else will fall into line and the whole dire question will be solved—indeed, it will solve itself quite naturally. This is the mountain you have to climb; and you are not the man to loiter distrustfully at the bottom, not the man to scale half-way and fall back defeated. You will set out bravely and never halt till you have reached the top, from which you shall survey your own dear country, Paradise Regained. All reforms are possible if only the reformer be true to that which is given him to do. Your Ideal is before you beckoning you on—the *re-making of the people*, your own kith and kin. For this purpose you are set in the high place. It is a trust vested in you by Him who knows the heart of man, who makes men His instruments, moulding them to His will. You will not fail of this high calling. Having proved to the nation, in your own way, that money avails not—not even a Treasury grant of £200,000 ear-marked "Relief"—you will next unfurl the banner of sound training and re-make Britain through the rising generation.

With this great hope, Sir—Britain's one and only Hope,

I beg to remain,

Yours respectfully,

JULIE SUTTER







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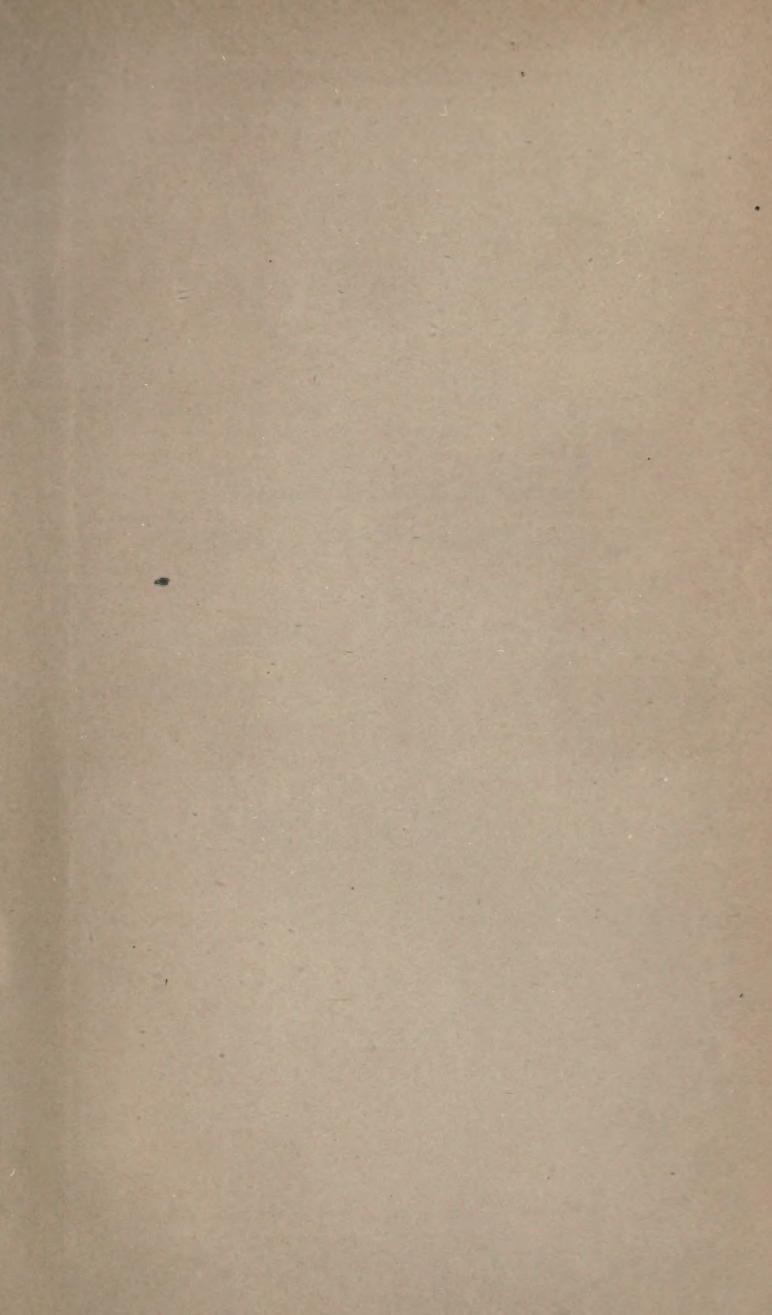


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